

ABSTRACT

SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

DAVIDSON, WANDA DENISE

B.S. ALABAMA STATE UNIVERSITY, 1984

M.S.W. UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA, 1994

A STUDY OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CULTURE AND EDUCATION

AMONG AFRICAN AMERICAN MALES WHO ARE LIKELY TO AGE

OUT OF FOSTER CARE IN THE STATE OF ALABAMA

Committee Chair: Richard Lyle, Ph.D.

Dissertation dated May 2015

This study examined the relationship between culture and education among African American males who were likely to age out of foster care. This study measured the importance of religion, involvement in social groups in the community, belief in strong family ties, an understanding of one's ethnicity and the importance of education has on African American males in foster care. Participants of this study were comprised of 137 youth in foster care ages 14-20, that were selected utilizing non-probability convenience sampling among the target population. The findings of this study indicated that the minority (27.0 percent) youth in foster care did not believe that culture and education was important. However, the majority (73.0 percent) of the respondents indicated they believed that culture and education was important.

A STUDY OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CULTURE AND EDUCATION
AMONG AFRICAN AMERICAN MALES WHO ARE LIKELY TO AGE
OUT OF FOSTER CARE IN THE STATE OF ALABAMA

A DISSERTATION
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF CLARK ATLANTA UNIVERSITY
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR
THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

BY
WANDA DENISE DAVIDSON

WHITNEY M. YOUNG, JR., SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

ATLANTA, GEORGIA

MAY 2015

© 2015

WANDA DENISE DAVIDSON

All Rights Reserved

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to first acknowledge God who is the source of my strength. Though this has been a difficult journey, God's word reminded me, "those who wait on the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not grow faint" (Isaiah 40:31). Secondly, I would like to acknowledge my husband, Earnest Davidson, Sr. It is because of his encouragement, continued support and sacrifice that my education did not end with my baccalaureate degree. He saw more in me than I did, thus propelling me to the position that I stand in today. Thirdly, I give honor to my mother, Vera Washington, who always made it clear that anything is possible if you believe. She is a woman that made it against all odds and helped me to see that I could as well. I would also like to give special thanks to my relatives, Marshall and Marie Brown, Roderick and Rachel Grice, and, Varnetta (Lamb) Robinson, for allowing me to stay in their home while pursuing my degree. I would like to send a heartfelt thank you to the faculty and staff at Clark Atlanta University and the Whitney M. Young, Jr., School of Social Work for their guidance and support. I acknowledge Mrs. Claudette Rivers-King who was always available for whatever was needed and Dr. Evaritus Obinyan for his insight and encouragement. I would also like to thank Dr. Richard Lyle and Dr. Robert Waymer for their invaluable support and guidance during my dissertation process and for serving on my dissertation committee. I am truly grateful.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	ii
LIST OF TABLES.....	v
CHAPTER	
I. INTRODUCTION.....	1
Statement of the Problem.....	6
Purpose of the Study.....	7
Research Questions.....	8
Hypotheses.....	8
Significance of the Study.....	9
II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE.....	11
Historical Perspective of Foster Care.....	11
Youth Aging Out of Foster Care.....	13
Culture in Foster Care.....	20
Education in Foster Care.....	49
Theoretical Framework.....	75
III. METHODOLOGY.....	79
Research Design.....	79
Description of the Site.....	79
Sample and Population.....	80
Instrumentation.....	80
Treatment of Data.....	81
Limitations of the Study.....	82

CHAPTER

IV.	PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS.....	83
	Demographic Data.....	83
	Culture among African Americans.....	90
	Education among African Americans.....	91
	Research Questions and Hypotheses.....	92
V.	CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	100
	Recommendations.....	104
APPENDIX		
A.	IRB Approval Letter.....	106
B.	Permission Letter.....	107
C.	Letter to Participants.....	109
D.	Survey Questionnaire.....	110
E.	SPSS Program Analysis.....	112
	REFERENCES.....	119

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1.	Demographic Profile of Study Respondents (N=137).....	84
Table 2.	I am a religious person.....	86
Table 3.	I am involved in social groups in my community.....	86
Table 4.	I believe strong family ties are important.....	87
Table 5.	I have a good understanding of my ethnic background.....	87
Table 6.	I believe schools are important for the community.....	88
Table 7.	I believe education is important.....	88
Table 8.	I plan to go to college.....	89
Table 9.	I feel good about furthering my education.....	89
Table 10.	Culture beliefs among research participants.....	91
Table 11.	Education beliefs among research participants.....	92
Table 12.	Education of foster care youth by culture beliefs among participants.....	93
Table 13.	I am a religious person by being involved in social groups.....	95
Table 14.	A good understanding of my ethnic background by belief in strong family ties.....	96
Table 15.	I believe schools are important by feel good about furthering my education.....	98

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The concept of children in foster homes goes as far back as the Old Testament, which refers to caring for dependent children as a duty under law. Early Christian church records indicate orphaned children lived with widows who were paid by the church. English Poor Laws in the 1500s allowed the placement of poor children into indentured service until they became adults. This practice was imported to the United States and was the beginning of placing children into foster homes (Encyclopedia of Everyday Law, 2003).

It is reported that prior to the American Civil War, orphaned or abandoned children who were indentured servants could be sold as chattel. Reportedly, many of these children were transported by ships from England to colonial America. The children received food and board in exchange for their labor. They were also taught a skill or trade in order to make a living when their indenturement ended. It was unfortunate that the conditions on the transport ships were overcrowded and unsanitary and many children died of various afflictions (Tompkins, 2010).

Prior to the mid-eighteenth century, a movement arose regarding orphaned and abandoned children which challenged the indentured system. The congregate living movement held that these children should be mass housed and rehabilitated in private

orphanages such as charity-supported almshouses. Reportedly, the first private congregate living facility in North America for these children was opened in Georgia. It was termed a “private orphan asylum” (Tompkins, 2010).

In an effort to push for the option that meant the least money out of pocket, the government provided limited assistance to private homes that took in orphans but lent political support to these emerging private congregate living facilities. These congregate facilities were mostly privately funded religious charities that did not rely on government funding. Unfortunately, these facilities mainly took in white children under the age of ten and rarely took in older or minority children (Tompkins, 2010).

Even though indentured service permitted exploitation, it was an improvement over almshouses where children did not learn and were exposed to unsanitary conditions and abusive caretakers. In the 1900s, social agencies began to pay and supervise foster parents. The government began state inspections of foster homes. Services were provided to natural families to enable the child to return home and foster parents were now seen as part of a team effort to provide for dependent children (Encyclopedia of Everyday Law, 2003).

Many children in foster care experience feelings of confusion, fear, apprehension of the unknown, loss, sadness, anxiety and stress. These feelings and experiences must be addressed and treated early to prevent or decrease poor developmental and mental health outcomes that ultimately affect a child’s educational experience and the quality of adulthood. Furthermore, institutional changes may help children in foster care adjust to their new environment and ultimately improve developmental and mental health as well as educational outcomes (Bruskas, 2008).

Foster care is a complex system. It serves children who have experienced abuse or neglect and is designed as a temporary service that responds to crises in the lives of children and families. The expectation is that children who enter care will either return to their parents as soon as possible, or will be provided with safe, stable, and loving families through placement with relatives or adoption. However, many children remain in foster care for extended periods of time or may “age out” and go on to live on their own (Bardell & Freundlick, 2001).

The population of children and young people in foster care has grown dramatically over the past decades, and the challenges associated with achieving permanency for them have mounted. As foster care faces new and increasing demands, policies and practice must respond in ways to ensure that children, their families, and their caregivers receive the highest quality service possible (Bardell & Freundlick, 2001).

Child welfare practitioners and researchers’ are faced with the daunting challenge of ensuring children in foster care successfully transition into adulthood. For many of the youth who experienced prior history of chronic abuse and placement instability, the likelihood of experiencing negative mental health, employment, and education outcomes increase. Due to the fact that research focusing on the experiences of foster care alumni of color is limited, existing interventions to address their negative developmental outcomes may not be effective (Garcia, 2010).

According to The American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry (2005), it was reported that a child enters the foster care system every two minutes. At that time, statistics indicated that over 500,000 children in the United States resided in some form of foster care. It was further reported that though African American children

made up only 15% of the general population, they made up two thirds of the foster care population and remain in care longer. This issue was prevalent in approximately 46 states and was not unique to large urban areas.

According to Child Welfare Information Gateway (2013), it was reported that, as of September 30, 2012, there was an estimated 399,546 children in foster care, with 26% being African American. According to the US Census Bureau (2014) data, the percentage of African Americans in the United States is only 13.1%. When looking at these two figures, it appears obvious that there continues to be a disproportionate representation of African American children in foster care.

The system supposedly strives to treat all children the same, but in reality all children in foster care do not stand on equal ground. African American children are not just disproportionately represented in foster care; they also suffer disparately poor outcomes. It is reported that African American children are more likely to be removed from their home and less likely to be adopted. Furthermore, they are more likely to age out of foster care without a family and are more frequently reported to child protective services (Evans, 2010).

National studies show no statistical differences in maltreatment rates between African American and Caucasian. With this in mind, it is questionable why the disparities in foster care exist. Furthermore, there is evidence that those working in the child welfare system still have preconceived ideas about African American families, and it is possible that these biases can negatively affect important decisions made about a child's future (Evans, 2010).

According to Evans (2010), some argue that the issue of disproportionality is more about economics than about race. African American families and neighborhoods are disproportionately poor, and poverty is highly correlated with a higher risk of child abuse. It is possible that overrepresentation by the child welfare system may have more to do with poverty and its related social problems such as abuse, rather than race. Furthermore, race and economics are so often intertwined; it is hard to isolate either as a specific cause.

It has been reported that social workers across the country have begun to take workshops designed to help them identify their own personal biases. Also, judges who help to decide the fates of children, often based on insufficient information, now have “bench cards” which ask specific questions in an effort to help them protect against institutional bias (Evans, 2010)

When working with African Americans, it is helpful to understand the character and history of the African people. Much of the way they act and their approach to different situation is a reflection of heritage, as well as cultural values. It is also beneficial to recognize the role that religion has in the lives of African Americans. It is religious beliefs and traditions that provide a means of dealing with many of the social issues that plague African Americans.

Every year many African American youth age out of foster care to become homeless, incarcerated or forced into welfare. Many of these young people also leave care with no permanent connections. While they have the potential and right to become participating citizens, it would seem that the government and their contracting agencies undermine their efforts (Ansell, 2010; Courtney, 2005).

The disparities that exist within the foster care system must be addressed in order to improve the outcomes of African Americans as they age out of foster care. It is apparent that cultural issues must be addressed when working with these young people. Furthermore, there is literature that suggests that educational outcomes need to be addressed as well.

Statement of the Problem

The majority of foster care studies have involved a focus on ensuring safety and permanency rather than on the life skills preparation of adolescents emancipating from foster care. Studies show that key factors that are important predictors of adolescent preparedness include involvement in experiential opportunities to integrate learning, sound educational bases, positive employment history and motivation, and sufficient income (Henderson, 2006).

It is estimated that 20,000 foster youth age out of foster care each year and attempt to live independently. Research indicates that these youth approach the transition to adulthood with significant educational deficits and are more likely to encounter problems with homelessness, difficulty accessing health care, substance abuse, early parenting, life on public assistance and incarceration. These issues illustrate that youth that age out of foster care are faced with many unique challenges (Baugh, 2008).

It is evident that there are many problems faced by youth leaving foster care. However, research indicates that African American youth leaving care may face more problems than Caucasian youth. One study indicated that 41% of African American youth who aged out of foster care had no earnings from ages 17 to 20, while only 12% of

Caucasian youth leaving care faced the same problem. The research concluded that those who aged out of foster care are underemployed and earn wages well below the poverty line (Riggs, 2002).

The primary focus of this study is to examine whether culture and education has an impact on the outcomes of African American males as they age out of foster care. The study will measure the importance of religion, social groups in the community, family ties, and an understanding of ethnicity has on African American males in foster care. Lastly, this study will measure the degree of importance of education for these youth.

It is imperative that agencies that work with African American youth in foster care develop strategies to work with these young people that address culture issues. This would involve collaborating with neighborhood based organization to provide services, establish councils or advisory committees on disproportionality and provide preventive services targeted at African American families.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between culture and education among African American males who are likely to age out of foster care. This study will measure the importance of religion, involvement in social groups in the community, family ties, and an understanding of ethnicity has on African American males in foster care. Lastly, this study will measure the degree of importance of education for these youth. The participants of the study were youth in foster care in Alabama just prior to leaving care.

Research Questions

The research questions of the study were as follows:

1. Is there a statistically significant relationship between culture and education among youth who are likely to age out of foster care in the state of Alabama?
2. Is there a statistically significant relationship between being a religious person and being involved in social groups in the community among youth who are likely to age out of foster care in the state of Alabama?
3. Is there a statistically significant relationship between strong family ties and an understanding of one's ethnic background among youth who are likely to age out of foster care in the state of Alabama?
4. Is there a statistically relationship between valuing schools in the community and furthering my education among youth who are likely to age out of foster care?

Hypotheses

The null hypotheses of the study were as follows:

1. There is no statistically significant relationship between culture and education among youth who are likely to age out of foster care.
2. There is no statistically significant relationship between being a religious person and being involved in social group in the community among youth who are likely to age out of foster care in the state of Alabama.

3. There is no statistically significant relationship between strong family ties and an understanding of one's ethnic background among youth who are likely to age out of foster care in the state of Alabama.
4. There is no statistically significant relationship between valuing schools in the community and furthering my education among youth who are likely to age out of foster care.

Significance of the Study

With the exception of incarcerated youth, foster youth are the only group that is involuntarily separated from their families through government intervention. Although the primary purpose of this separation is to protect youth from harm by their caregivers, in removing them from their homes, the state nevertheless assumes the responsibilities associated with parenting, including preparing them for independence (Courtney, 2005).

An issue of concern is there are a significant greater proportion of African American children in foster care than children of other races and ethnicities. Studies also show that African American children also stay in foster care longer. Furthermore, there is evidence that there may be bias or cultural misunderstandings and distrust between child welfare decisions makers and the families they serve (Ventimiglia, 2007).

In this country, the academic experiences of African American males in foster care are unlike the experiences of any other group in or outside the foster care system. They are subject to the same barriers which seem to confound and encumber the academic progress of many African American males while also subjected to a host of barriers unique to their status as foster children (Tate, 2001).

This study contends to show the relationship between culture and education on African American males who are likely to age out of foster care. This information would be important in order to assist these youth as they age out of care. It is, therefore, of great significance to demonstrate with the data whether culture and education has an impact on African American males as they age out of foster care as well as address the outcomes as they transition from foster care to adulthood.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The purpose of presenting this review of the literature was to lay a scholarly foundation in order to establish a need for the study. This review covers a historical perspective of foster care and youth aging out of the system, as well as current efforts to move children out of foster. The review will cover information around culture and education of youth aging out of foster care, with emphasis on African Americans.

Historical Perspective of Foster Care

The welfare of children holds an exceptionally important place in American public policy. Until the Social Security Act established the contemporary framework for child welfare policy, children's concerns were met in a variety of ways. Even before the reform movement of about 1890-1910, voluntary agencies and local communities had mobilized resources to protect and aid children (Dobelstein, 1990).

The Children's Aid Society of New York was founded in 1853 by Charles Loring Brace for the purpose of affecting a new approach to child care. The circular announcing the formation of the Society expressed the urgency of the task ahead. Conceptually, Brace was bent on saving children through the provision of education and shelter and, where necessary, through the separation of children from their parents (Axinn and Levin, 1992).

Foster care is when a child or children are temporarily removed from their home due to abuse, neglect or abandonment and are placed in the custody of the state (Evans, 2010).

Reportedly, of all childhood experiences, foster care placement is among the most tragic. Though clearly helpful to some children, foster care placement frequently introduces additional instability to their already chaotic lives, potentially harming them (Wildeman & Emanuel, 2014). A child will remain in foster care until he or she can return home safely. If this cannot occur, it is the responsibility of the state to either place them with relatives or for adoption (Evans, 2010).

The Foster Care Program is a permanently authorized entitlement that provides open-ended matching payments to states for the costs of maintaining certain children in foster care, and associated administrative, child placement, and training costs. As wards of the state, foster care children are dependent on government funded health services. The Social Security Act contains the primary sources of federal funds available to states for child welfare, foster care, and adoption activities (Encyclopedia of Everyday Law, 2003).

Child welfare services and the foster care system have changed in the past 30 years. A convergence of factors, such as poverty, homelessness, substance abuse, and discrimination, has placed greater numbers of families at higher risk of child abuse and neglect than in the past. To best serve the children in care, child welfare professionals have been exploring ways to move children out of state custody and into stable, permanent placement in a timely manner (Hurley, 2012).

In the 1980s, the Adoption Assistance and Child Welfare Act passed into law and gave a big push to the adoption movement as a more desirable alternative to foster care.

Government policy shifted away from orphan children being placed into long-term foster care. The federal government unburdened itself of much of its role in foster care funding and saddled individual states with the responsibility (Tompkins, 2010).

In an effort to prevent children from languishing in foster care, states have federal guidelines they must follow which specifies timelines for returning children to their families. The Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997 (ASFA) established timelines and conditions when a petition must be filed to terminate parental rights. According to the act, if a child has been in foster care for 15 of the most recent 22 months, a petition to terminate parental rights must be filed and concurrently, identify, recruit, process and approve possible an adoptive family for the child (Encyclopedia of Everyday Law, 2003).

Youth Aging Out of Foster Care

There are many youth who are not adopted and do not return home. What then for the foster youth who age out of the public welfare system at age eighteen, which include youth who grow up in residential treatment centers, group homes, and shelter care? These youth must be prepared to live independently. This preparation should focus on teaching everyday life skills necessary for survival. There should also be an emphasis on permanency planning and the development of a network of long term relationships that connect the youth to adults who can continue to support healthy growth throughout their lives (Schneider-Munoz, 2010).

It has been reported that factors that aid in the success of youth emancipating from foster care includes participation in an Independent Living Program. These programs aide youth in their daily living skills by helping them with the managing of

finances, finding affordable housing and acquiring a job. The participation in extra-curricular activities also added more meaning to their life (Prieto, 2008).

Prieto (2008) conducted a study with former foster youth ages 18-25 to explore what key factors, such as skills and support systems, they had upon aging out of foster care in order to be successful and self-sufficient in life. The participants in this study included 14 former foster youth. At the time of this study, these young people were participating in programs offered by the Orangewood Foundation. Respondents were asked about demographics, support systems, skills, education, psychosocial adjustments and unique needs while in the foster care system and after emancipation.

The findings revealed that most of the respondents acquired skills from participating in an Independent Living Program which helped prepare them to live on their own. It was also noted that these young people were able to connect with at least one adult while in the foster care system that served as their support person. Finally, the study revealed that although all of the respondents stated that they faced traumatic and life changing events, they were able to overcome the challenges they faced while in the foster care system and upon emancipation (Prieto, 2008).

There has been increasing concern regarding how youth experience the foster care system and how they fare once they leave. Subsequent to foster care, youth often face homelessness, unemployment, lack of educational options, and reliance on public assistance. An understanding of how these youth make sense of who they are, their experiences, and where they belong in society can further an understanding of their social, educational, and occupational outcomes (Atukpaw, 2009).

Research, in general, has not explored foster youths' subjective experiences, particularly how their perceptions of themselves and their futures are constructed. Furthermore, the way foster youth manage critical developmental processes influences whether they contribute to or become a cost to society. With this in mind, Atukpawa (2009) conducted a study to address the gap in knowledge by advancing an understanding of the intertwining of psychosocial development and participation in social and institutional settings during the transition to adulthood. Furthermore, this study examined the intersection of individual, community, and societal level factors to attend to the mutually constituted relationship between individuals and their environments (Atukpawa, 2009).

This study used observations, interviews, and document analysis to explore identity development and future orientation in a community of foster youth. Participants included 28 current and former youth who had participated in two Independent Living Programs. In an effort to ascertain how these youth saw themselves and their futures in the context of their social worlds, the research explored three questions. First, how is the meaning of foster care constructed among a community of current and former foster youth? Secondly, how do social and institutional settings such as Independent Living Programs support and/or constrain foster youth's current and future selves? Thirdly, how do foster youth think about their identities and their futures (Atukpawa, 2009)?

The results revealed that youth characterized their perceptions of the foster care system and their personal experiences within that system in several ways. Reportedly, the majority of the youth viewed foster care as a place of objectification and a prison. The youth also perceived foster care as an opportunity, pseudo family, and a place of refuge.

This study also found that Independent Living Programs function as a community where youth are able to develop sustainable relationships with staff and peers, imagine a successful future, and learn how to be an adult in today's society. Finally, research findings suggest that the idea of a normalcy is central to personal identity for foster youth (Atukpawu, 2009).

It has been reported that youth who age out of foster care and transition to independent living are among the most compromised youth due to having minimal family support. As a result of facing life challenges without support from permanent connections, this population is overrepresented among the homeless, in prisons, and in adult psychiatric wards. With this mind, it is imperative that policy makers focus on designing programs to meet the many needs of these young people (Mann-Feder, 2010).

In 1986, those in the field of child welfare were just beginning to recognize its responsibility for the youth who had, in essence, grown-up as wards of the state. In that year, Public Law 99-272 provided the first federal funding to states for the purpose of preparing 16, 17, and 18 year olds for the day when they would no longer be able to remain in foster care. The funding was modest, limited in scope, and authorized for only two years (Ansell, 2010).

In 1999, the John H. Chafee Foster Care Independence was created with the passage of the Foster Care Independence Act. The program was named for Senator Chafee of Rhode Island who had championed similar legislation for older youth in foster care. His death earlier in 1999 renewed legislative concern for youth who were not likely to achieve permanency before leaving foster care (NRCYD, 2012).

Since 1999, other laws have shaped the Chafee Program. The Promoting Safe and Stable Family Amendments of 2001 added the Education and Training Voucher Program (ETV) which provides up to \$5,000 per year for post-secondary education. The Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008 enables Tribes to receive funds directly to administer Chafee services and Education and Training Vouchers (NRCYD, 2012).

Over the last 25 years, professionals have debated the primary focus for working with older youth in foster care. They have learned that there is no one size fits all approach to life skills instruction. Rather than working from a standardized curriculum, it is far better to be guided by an agreed upon range of life skills competencies. It is also better to involve the youth in determining what gets taught and when (Ansell, 2010).

In 1994, Congress enacted the Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) program to monitor the conformity of state child welfare services to federal state plan standards, with the intent to achieve more positive outcomes for children and families. Regulations issued in 2000 established a formal review system to assess state services quality and results-oriented accountability in terms of seven outcomes based on child safety, permanency, and well-being outcomes standards (Gustavsson & MacEachron, 2012).

One of the three well-being outcomes on the CFSR required that youths receive services to meet their educational needs (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Children's Bureau, 2010), as measured, in large part, by an educational assessment of needs, such as special education or tutoring, in the case plan and then provision of services. Although these analyses did not isolate the foster group of children

from those receiving in-home services, the 2001-02 and 2007-08 findings indicated that between 83% and 87% of CFSR case reviews achieved this federal standard (Gustavsson & MacEachron, 2012).

All states need to address the problem of permanency for older youth in order to comply with outcomes on the Federal CFSRs. While a majority of states had strengths on CFSR items that specifically mentioned youth, barriers to permanency were noted, including gaps in services for adolescents, lack of placement resources for adolescents, and problems with the quality and consistency of independent living planning (Child Welfare Information Gateway, 2006).

Older youth in foster care face a number of barriers to achieving permanency that are specific to their age group. Recognizing these challenges may help child welfare workers seek solutions that can facilitate permanent families and connections for these youth. Ideally, permanency for youth should include a permanent legal connection to a family, such as reuniting them with birth parents, adoption, kinship care, or legal guardianship. However, when these options are less likely, social workers may want to help youth pursue other permanent connection concurrently with caring adults. It is hopeful these adults may provide lifelong support that will help the youth in successfully transitioning to adulthood (Child Welfare Information Gateway, 2006).

Finding permanent families for older children and youth in foster care continues to be a serious issue. There needs to be a strong focus from foster care workers and other child welfare professionals. As states and agencies work toward this goal, supported by federal legislation and funding, more evidence based practice will become available to inform the field (Child Welfare Information Gateway, 2006).

There is widespread belief that young people who age out of foster care near the time they turn age 18 are particularly vulnerable to poor economic and social outcomes as they enter adulthood. Over the past few years, significantly more attention has been paid to youth aging out of foster care and more concern expressed for their future prospects. As mentioned earlier, the 1999 Foster Care Independence Act provided fiscal incentives to states for enhanced services to these youth and changed the age of eligibility for foster youth from sixteen to fourteen. In addition, the Act requires states to evaluate their services for this population of young people, and has provided additional resources to do so (Goerge, 2002).

As stated previously, Public Law 106-169 established the John H. Chafee Foster Care Independence Program (CFCIP) of the Social Security Act by providing states with flexible funding to carry out programs that assist youth in making the transition from foster care to self-sufficiency. The law also required the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) to develop a data collection system to track the independent living services states provide to youth and develop outcome measures that may be used to assess states' performance in operating their independent living programs (ACF, 2012).

In order to meet the mandate of the law that was established by the John H. Chafee Act, the Administration for Children and Families published a proposed rule in the Federal Register on July 14, 2006 and a final rule on February 26, 2008. The regulation established the National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD) and required that states engage in two data collection activities (ACF, 2012).

The National Youth in Transition Database requires states to first collect information on each youth ages 14 to 20 that are receiving independent living services

paid for or provided by the state agency that administers the Chafee Foster Care Independence Program. Secondly, states have to collect demographic and outcome information on certain youth in foster care whom the state will follow over time to collect additional outcome information (ACF, 2012).

The National Youth in Database ruling went into effect on October 1, 2010. The information will allow ACF to track which independent living services states provide and assess the collective outcomes for youth. The law requires ACF to impose a penalty of between 1% and 5% of the state's annual allotment on any state that fails to comply with the reporting requirements (ACF, 2012).

Culture in Foster Care

It is reported that the difficulties that adolescents encounter as they age out of the foster care system are numerous and fairly well documented. Such difficulties include poor health, lack of affordable housing, low-wage employment, limited educational opportunities, and unreliable or nonexistent familial support (Ryan, Hernandez, & Herz, 2007). However, youth emphasize that the importance of housing in the transition to adulthood (Fowler, 2009).

The child welfare system, which is designed to rescue children from harmful conditions, creates a situation that can be psychologically unhealthy for the very children it is designed to protect (Brooks Herd, 2011). According to Roberts (2010), this is evident when an examination is done on the outcomes of African Americans in the foster care system. Roberts stated that you can make a good case that African American children fared worse than others.

Curtis and Denby (2011) conducted a study to examine the laws that govern the child welfare system in this country. They also assessed the manner in which these laws do not rectify or prevent the poor outcomes experienced by African American children. The study focused on the disproportionality among African American children in the child welfare system, with an emphasis on the role and training of social workers concerning this issue. The authors examine policy reform and the implications for social work education and practice.

According to Curtis and Denby (2011), in order to improve the outcomes for African American children within the child welfare system, virtually every aspect of this system would require a transformation. This would involve the implementation of strategies and steps, an identification of potential roadblocks, followed by methods for overcoming these roadblocks. In child welfare, it is imperative that social workers and other human service personnel are educated to evaluate the effects of individual decisions, administrative choices and policies on the lives of children and their families.

Gray and Nybell (1990) indicated that child welfare services takes place in a cultural context and that effective work with African American families require a culturally relative perspective on African American culture. In an effort to increase success when working with these families, it is necessary to help service providers acquire an analytical approach to culture and factual knowledge about the cultural behavior of the family members. Furthermore, staff must be prepared through training to implement a cultural knowledge base in interactions with African American families, along with supervisory and policy supports.

It is imperative that agencies prioritize hiring well-trained, ethnically diverse child welfare staff. Agencies must acknowledge that racial disparities do exist and understand its impact. Furthermore, to address the larger problems in context, it is necessary to bring together decision makers from a range of systems including education, mental health, public social services, foster care, adoptions, family preservation and the criminal justice system to begin to acknowledge the intersystemic issues leading to disproportionality (McRoy, 2008).

It is evident that culture plays a major role in terms of how protective services interface with families. Understanding the dynamics of a family based on their culture is important in determining whether or not a child is removed. What is normal in one cultural may seem odd in another. Therefore, it is important that social workers are not disconnected from the cultural dynamics of a community, in which they may cause more harm than good in removal of a child. Additionally, it has been suggested that agencies have not placed enough emphasis on disproportionality of African American in foster care. What policy makers have noticed is that for three decades, racially matching children for adoptive placement was a common practice. However, in recent years, it appeared that this practice delayed adoptive placements, especially for children of color. As a result, The Multi-Ethnic Placement Act (MEPA) was established (Child Welfare Information Gateway, 2003).

The Multi-Ethnic Placement Act of 1994 (MEPA) prohibited states and other entities that received federal funding assistance from delaying or denying a child a foster care or adoption placement solely on the basis of race, color or national origin. The act also required that states diligently recruit foster and adoptive parents who reflect the

racial and ethnic diversity of the foster care population for a state to remain eligible for federal assistance for child welfare program (Ventimiglia, 2007).

MEPA (P. L. 103-382), is one of two separate legislative acts that is relevant to understanding the legal standings of adoption across race and the continuing controversy about transracial adoption. Another law concerning race-matching adoption is the Interethnic Adoption Provisions (IEP) of 1996 (P. L. 104-188). This amendment was aimed to clarify and strengthen the MEPA legislation. This amendment deleted the word “solely” from MEPA’s prohibition against delaying or denying an adoptive placement on the basis of race and strengthened enforcement. Though it is clear that the MEPA/IEP legislations prohibits race matching in adoption, it encourages initiatives within the states to identify a diverse pool of potential foster and adoptive parents that is at least in the proportions represented in the state’s population (Johnson, Mickelson, & Davila, 2013).

It is evident that transracial placement, which is not preferred by foster care workers, is sometimes necessary. However, race is often ignored and relegated to a position of non-importance. Some foster children and some African American foster parents directly embraced racial discussion and cultural issues. Race and culture concerns are important but often ignored by the child welfare system (Brooks Herd, 2011).

African American children placed transracially into Caucasian foster or adoptive families may find themselves struggling to develop their racial identity. African American children who are completely isolated from the African American community often lose cultural connections that give them a clear sense of who they are. They may not learn the survival skills for being an African American in a racist society. As adults,

members of their community may even reject them for being “too white” while white strangers see only their color (Riggs, 2002).

Brooks Herd (2011) developed a study in an effort to contribute to the body of child welfare literature focused on foster care. The goal of the study was to explore how cultural identity was maintained and reinforced by foster families when the foster child had a different racial and cultural orientation. In this study, the research questions focused on how the foster care system addressed racial identity issues and how foster parents assign meaning to the transracial foster care experience. The study also examined whether preparation were done by the foster care system in order to help foster parents manage issues of racial identity.

The results of the study yielded four major findings. As mentioned previously, they found that race and culture concerns were important but often ignored by the child welfare system. Secondly, the standardized pre-training curriculum for foster parents needs reinforcement in the area of race and cultural issues. Thirdly, he found that personal values of the foster parents and foster care workers influence placement of children. Finally, increased emphasis in the curriculum on hair and skin care is necessary to increase the ease of transition to a transracial placement (Brooks Herd, 2011).

Nasuti, York, and Sandell (2004) conducted a study to compare role perceptions of African American and White foster parents. The study also addressed intervening variables. These included years of experience as a foster parent, age, education, total number of foster children that had been cared for by the foster parent, whether the foster parent had relatives who had been foster parents and type of community, whether rural or urban.

The data indicated that African American foster parents had more years of experience as a foster parent, were older, less educated and more likely lived in urban communities. The data also indicated that the African American foster parents were more likely to have fostered relatives and to have relatives who had been foster parents. The study also suggested that no racial difference exists in the priority foster parents gave to their role (Nasuti, York, & Sandell, 2004).

In terms of role perception, findings indicated there were some significant differences. African American foster parents tended to view their role, in terms of birth family facilitator, as approximately equal between the foster parent and the agency, whereas white foster parents tended to view the agency as having twice the level of responsibility for this role. In terms of maintaining the child's contact with his or her family, African American foster parents view themselves as having a strong role, whereas their white counterparts rate that role as less their responsibility (Nasuti, York, & Sandell, 2004).

The findings of this study indicate that some distinct differences exist in role perceptions between African American and White foster parents. With this in mind, it is evident that these differences could have a significant effect on the development of foster care policies, training, and services that incorporate the cultural strengths and values found in African American kinship culture. Finally, foster care workers who are able to familiarize themselves with the strengths of African American culture are better able to build frameworks for delivering effective foster care services (Nasuti, York, & Sandell, 2004).

Ethnic identity is believed by some to function as a protective factor for ethnic minority youth, in particular African American youth. Although ethnic identity development is primarily the result of racial socialization practices, it may also be influenced by contextual factors. Reportedly, neighborhood factors, parent characteristics, parenting style, and bicultural competence may play pivotal roles in the ethnic identity development of African American youth (Bennett, Jr., 2010).

Exploratory factor analysis and path analysis were used to explore the influence of certain contextual factors on the ethnic identity content of study participants. According to the findings, it is suggested that urban hassles negatively affect the content of ethnic identity but that this effect may be mediated by racial socialization. This research represents a continuing effort to explore the influence of contextual factors on ethnic identity of African American youth. Furthermore, by broadening the focus to include features of parents as well as of neighborhoods may prove a more complete understanding (Bennett, Jr., 2010).

The disproportionality of African American children in stranger foster care is an ongoing concern. It is evident that systemic factors contribute to this disproportionality. However, a lack of cultural fit for some service interventions may also explain some of the problems. Though program initiatives such as Family Preservation and Kinship Care are designed to preclude the need for stranger foster care, there is still an overrepresentation of African American children in this type of placement as well. It is suggested that perhaps an Afrocentric approach to service delivery would improve the likelihood of achieving child welfare goals of safety, permanence and well-being within the child's own family system (Jackson, 2010).

In his publication of *Afrocentricity, The Theory of Social Change*, Molefi Kete Asante (2003) explained:

Afrocentricity is a mode of thought and action in which the centrality of African interests, values and perspectives predominate. In regard to theory, it is the placing of African people in the center of any analysis of African phenomena. In terms of action and behavior, it is the devotion to the idea that what is in the best interest of African consciousness is at the heart of ethical behavior. Finally, Afrocentricity seeks to enshrine the idea that blackness itself is a trope of ethics. Thus, to be black is to be against all forms of oppression, racism, classism, homophobia, patriarchy, child abuse, pedophilia, and white racial domination (p. 2).

Jackson (2010) conducted a study in an effort to expand the understanding of Afrocentric practice. The research study used a qualitative case study approach and an analytic framework based on the symbolic interaction theory. The sources of data were obtained from participant observation, document review and semi-structured interviews of organizational leaders, direct service providers, and family members. In the study, Jackson discussed the need to realize the importance of culture in the delivery of services, in terms of belief systems, values and traditions. There was also discussion on the need to learn to engage in cross-cultural dialogues and the impact of culture on goals of clientele.

This approach acknowledged the need to help the workforce address the influence of oppression and the role of Eurocentric values and principles in their own lives and in their approach to service provision. Furthermore, the study raised questions about the

difference between evidence-based practice and values-based practice and the role of personal values and beliefs in implementation. Finally, of the many Afrocentric values and principles, the family members consistently expressed the importance of authentic relationship (Jackson, 2010).

Briggs and McBeath (2010), as well indicated that attention should be paid to sustaining culturally appropriate, evidence-based service delivery initiatives. Growing a system wide commitment to culturally sensitive child welfare programming requires providing staff supports and additional organizational resources. Furthermore, staff supports should include the addition of staff positions focusing specifically on training and implementation of different evidence-based approaches, as well as providing and regularly updating culturally specific trainings and workshops. There is also a need for the provision of flexible funding for service providers to collaborate with community groups to develop new evidence-based initiatives.

Research indicates that being a culturally sensitive caregiver for foster youth requires the ability to see the strengths the child may possess. It is also helpful to be aware of one's own culture. There is evidence that despite the culture of adversity, some children bounce back from bad situations and emerge as resilient adults. It should also be noted that an awareness of the adversities experienced by foster youth can be a good step toward delivering cultural competent care (McGuinness & Bloome, 2007).

Laursen (2014) stressed that creating a positive culture even with the most troubled youth requires staff who believe in their potential and greatness. It must be understood that children are social beings that rely on interactions with others to survive

and thrive. It is also evident that culture in schools and youth organizations must be designed so that youth can bond with supportive peers and adults.

It is important to note that youth need the opportunity to develop confidence in their capacity to influence their lives socially, spiritually and politically. While they share a common humanity, they are diverse in nationality, ethnicity, culture, religion, family background, sexual orientation, and individual experience. The power of negative or positive peer influence is evident. With this in mind, youth need adults who care and believe in them, as well as provide them with support (Laursen, 2014).

Harvey, Loughney, and Moore (2002) believed that interventions at any level in the continuum of care can contribute to the healthy development of children. This was based on their work in the foster care system. With this in mind, they presented an article that focused on a model program for African American males in shelter care between the ages of 7 and 14. They believed that this model program has application to all racial and ethnic groups.

In this program, the children reside in shelter care for 60 days and all attended school. The program focused on raising the child's level of critical thinking and problem solving. The program also assisted the children in the developing their own innate skills, as well as coaching them in the development of successful school behaviors. Reportedly, 98% of the children admitted were African Americans from the inner city. With this in mind, the director hired African American males to serve as role models, especially those knowledgeable in child development and behavioral interventions (Harvey, Loughney, & Moore, 2002).

It is evident that knowing one's culture with the accompany feelings of pride can contribute to the development of self-esteem. It is also helpful when a child's environment is culturally stimulating. The shelter hung pictures on the wall of accomplished African Americans and provided field trips to African American museums and institutions. The shelter also valued ceremonies and celebration, such as birthdays and holidays (Harvey, Loughney, & Moore, 2002).

According to Harvey, Loughney, and Moore (2002), the program had been functioning for a year and a half, however they did not have quantitative data but estimated qualitative result did exist. The findings indicated that most of the children at discharge demonstrated more appropriate behaviors with peers, staff and other authority figures. It was also noted that most of the children had become relatively successful in school, had improved their social skills and ability to negotiate unstructured environment, and were more likely to express life-long goals and career choices.

The model program had implications for policy development on federal, state, and local levels. On the federal level, policy should mandate that state and local municipalities increase the educational requirements of shelter staff. On the state and local levels, policy should encourage the utilization of culturally specific service delivery models and develop a tool to measure competency. This should be in the area of child development, family interaction and cultural competence. Staff should be evaluated in the program to ensure their intervention skills in working with this population. It was evident that the quality of a program was determined by the ability of the staff to work effectively with the children. Furthermore, it is critical for children in foster care to

experience a program that maximize their potential for success (Harvey, Loughney, & Moore, 2002).

At any given moment, an estimated 550,000 children reside in kinship or foster care placements in the United States. These children are at particular high risk to develop low self-esteem and self-image. Some studies have suggested that one indicator of positive self-image is the possession of a positive racial/ethnic identity. Research on the racial/ethnic identity development and racial socialization experiences of foster youth has been limited to social service providers' account and the use of quantitative methods (Floyd, 2008).

In a study done by Floyd (2008), there were findings that suggest that participants have unique attitudes toward their experiences of racial/ethnic socialization. Participants included 10 former foster youth of different racial/ethnic background. They reported receiving inconsistent and, at times, contradictory racial/ethnic messages from their families, foster care providers and professionals, making the development of a positive racial/ethnic identity difficult. Former foster youth interviewed believed that increased dialogue with foster care providers and professionals about issues of race and culture would benefit foster youth's integration of the multiple messages they receive.

Floyd (2008) indicated that developing positive racial attitudes about one's racial/ethnic group and one's inclusion in that group can be difficult for foster children. Although foster children experience their biological families as the first environment where they encounter notions of their racial/ethnic group, this encounter may be interrupted by child welfare involvement. Furthermore, not only are these children living away from their biological families, but they are also living away from their families'

perceptions of their racial/ethnic heritage and any possibilities of learning from their families about their unique position within that heritage.

Studies on racial socialization have found a relation between cultural socialization and racial identity. There is also research that demonstrates that cultural socialization can be linked to child outcomes related to competence, connection and confidence. In addition, it is likely that research will show connections to other areas related to positive youth development (Evans, Banerjee, Aldana, Foust, & Rowley, 2012).

According to Zarrett and Lerner (2008), positive youth development is supported by a growing body of research on families, schools, and neighborhoods as a cutting edge approach for enhancing adolescent development, and for helping youth reach their full potential. Research suggests that the more exposure adolescents have to positive resources and experiences, the more likely it is that they will develop positively.

Evans, Banerjee, Aldana, Foust, and Rowley (2012) conducted a review to consider the relation between racial socialization and positive youth development in African American families. The central premise was that positive youth outcomes are often directly supported through traditional racial socialization messages. The review involved a brief review of the literature on positive youth development among African American youth, a discussion of the potential role of families as promoters of positive youth development, as well as additional considerations crucial to reframing research agendas as it relates to positive youth development among youth of color.

Findings from this review demonstrated that racial socialization is well related to competence and connection assets. Though there is small but growing body of research on positive outcomes among African American youth and families, there is also an

abundance of research on negative outcomes or risk-based development. With this in mind, discerning a model of normative development for African Americans will require more theoretical and empirical knowledge of positive youth development (Evans et al., 2012).

Researchers must look beyond communities and schools for information about contextual sites for positive development. It is also evident that resilience is about surviving not thriving and that focusing only on problem driven research may prevent someone from identifying the gifts and talents of youth who show no decline (Evans et al., 2012).

It is important to understand how cultural values, beliefs and traditions of foster parents are related to placement success because a substantial proportion of children in care come from culturally diverse backgrounds. Study shows that foster parents describe six themes that would help them in fostering. These include understanding different cultures, training, self-awareness, agency support, open discussion and community services (Brown, Sintzel, Arnault, & George, 2009).

In an article by Delphin-Rittmon, Andres-Hyman, Flanagan, & Davidson (2012), they offered seven essential strategies for promoting and sustaining organizational and systemic cultural competence. The first strategy is to provide executive level support and accountability. This would include disseminating cultural competence standards and guidelines throughout the system, ensure policy and fiscal alignment and institute accountability strategies for ensuring multicultural change. The second strategy is to foster patient, community and stakeholder participation and partnership. This involves

promoting stakeholder participation and developing community relationships and partnerships.

A third strategy for promoting cultural competence is to conduct cultural competence assessments. The input of clients is a valuable strategy that may identify strengths and growth areas. A fourth strategy is to develop incremental and realistic cultural competence action plans. This involves selecting realistic goals and engage in strengths based planning (Delphin-Rittmon, Andres-Hyman, Flanagan, & Davidson, 2012).

A fifth strategy to promote cultural competence is to ensure linguistic competence. This includes disseminating information about the availability of bilingual/bicultural services and utilizing innovative technologies. A sixth strategy is to develop a system strategy for managing staff and client grievances in an effort to resolves issues timely (Delphin-Rittmon et al., 2012).

A final strategy to promote cultural competence is to diversify, develop and retain a cultural competent workforce. Instituting an ongoing cultural competence education and training for staff at all levels is essential. Intervening at multiple levels simultaneously can help transform an organization so that the cultural beliefs, worldview, and preferences of all clientele are valued and incorporated into the service delivery and system development process (Delphin-Rittmon et al., 2012).

Casey Family Programs (2005) video titled, "Knowing who you are," interviewed former foster youth, social workers, kinship caregivers, and child welfare administrators to share their unique perspectives about why race and ethnicity matter and the importance of helping youth develop their racial and ethnic identity. Olivia Gonzalez, former foster

youth, discussed how as a teenager she did not know her ethnicity. As a result, she struggled with her identity. Ms. Gonzalez indicated that because of her ethnic features, while at school she identified with the Hispanic groups which included the way they dressed and act. However, when she returned to her foster home, she was criticized for her actions. Fortunately, Ms. Gonzalez had a social worker that helped her with her ethnic identity.

It is essential that foster parents and social workers prepare children in foster care to deal with racism and help them to understand their culture. All too often youth in care lose connection with their racial and ethnic heritage and are not provided with the necessary skills to cope with or address racism and discrimination in their lives. Forming a racial and ethnic identity is important for every young person. Social workers play a key role in helping youth in care develop a healthy racial and ethnic identity. It is also important to note that many times, the social worker maybe the only stable person in a foster child's life (Casey Family Programs, 2005).

Foster care takes away a child's past and history. Thus, it is important for the social worker to help them make connections with their family and culture. It is also evident that children move around so much while in care that it makes it difficult to fit in. With this in mind, it is essential that these children know who they are, where they came from and be comfortable with their identity. This is a life long journey (Casey Family Programs, 2005).

The social studies have a wealth of opportunity and the responsibility to create equitable learning environments for diverse populations. It is a discipline well suited for the introduction of versatile pedagogy by culturally competent social studies instructors

who adapt to students' cognitive abilities and behavioral aptitude. Perhaps no group is in greater need of specialized learning opportunities than African American males living in foster care (Tate, 2001).

Effective social studies pedagogy recognizes the influence of culture on the learning process. In one study, data indicate that the primary subjects of the study, African American males in foster care, are not being served by culturally competent instructors of child welfare workers. Instructors who understand how to engage and communicate with students at the cultural level are able to create classrooms that are responsive to the needs of diverse groups (Tate, 2001).

According to White et al. (2008), past research indicates that stronger ethnic identity is related to better outcomes in areas such as academic achievement and mental health and it is important to provide youth in foster care with opportunities to develop their ethnic identity. Using data from in-person interviews with foster youth ages 14-17; the study explored two areas related to identity. These included youth perceptions about their own ethnic identity and attitudes about ethnic identity development specific to the experience of being in foster care.

In terms of foster care experiences, results indicated significant differences existed by race and ethnicity. It appeared that African American youth, in particular, entered care at a significantly younger age than Caucasian youth ($t(137) = 2.70, p < .01$) and Hispanic/Latino ($t(118) = 2.74, p < .01$), and Caucasian youth experienced a significantly higher number of placements than African American youth ($t(137) = 2.68, p < .01$). Overall, findings showed that three quarters of the youth (73.5%) reported

having at least one caregiver whose ethnicity was the same as theirs at the time of the interview (White et al., 2008).

In order to measure ethnic identity and attitudes about ethnic identity, this study used the Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM) scale (White et al., 2008). The MEIM is a new scale for use with diverse groups (Phinney, 1992). The MEIM produced an overall score and scores for two subscales: (1) affirmation, belonging, and commitment, and (2) ethnic identity search (White et al., 2008).

The results indicated that there were significant differences between racial and ethnic groups on both subscales and the overall score, controlling for demographics and foster care experiences. African American youth and Hispanic/Latino youth had significantly higher scores than Caucasian youth on both of the subscales and on the overall score. However, there were no significant differences in scores between African American youth and Hispanic/Latino youth (White et al., 2008).

The results of this study suggested that African American youth and Hispanic/Latino youth have a stronger sense of ethnic identity than Caucasian youth. The findings also stated that while African American and Hispanic/Latino youth reported that they had learned about their ethnic traditions in foster care to a greater extent than Caucasian youth, they also expressed a desire to learn more about their ethnic background to a greater degree than Caucasian youth (White et al., 2008).

It is evident that supporting a youth of color in ethnic identity formation may result in increased knowledge of the historical and current contributions one's racial and ethnic group has made, as well as the challenges faced by one's group. This may result in the development of personal pride, increased self-esteem, and a stronger feeling of

connectedness with one's culture. Understanding how youth in foster care identify ethnically and understanding their beliefs related to ethnic identity may lead to the enhancement of services provided to youth across child welfare, education, and mental health systems (White et al., 2008).

Culture and context is an important component of the work with foster youth. Young people need to have the opportunity to learn life skills from someone who understands their culture and knows their hopes and dreams for the future. It is hard to know how to keep someone safe, if you never see or understand the potential danger. Life skills instruction also needs to be culturally relevant to the youth. For example, the skills that youth need to live and work in rural Oklahoma are very different from what youth need in Washington, DC (Ansell, 2010).

According Gavazzi, Alford, and McKenry (1996), it has been hypothesized that life skills programs that do not focus on issues related to cultural backgrounds of its participants have little success. This situation is especially true of urban youth. In response to the lack of focus on cultural issues, the Ohio Office of Child Care and Family Services implemented a culturally specific rites of passage program for ethnic male and female adolescents as part of their Independent Living Program.

One of the goals of the rites of passage program was to build an ethnic identity among youth in foster care through a variety of didactic and experiential activities. The primary participants of the program were urban African American males between fifteen and eighteen years. Historically, rites of passage have been used by society to facilitate the transition of its offspring from childhood to adulthood. Once the rites of passage are

completed, the young person is considered an adult with new responsibilities (Gavazzi, Alford, & McKenry, 1996).

Themes that emerged as a result of the rites of passage program included emphasis on self-direction, individual responsibilities, and hard work. Participants also had dialogue on intrinsic values, inner peace, and learning from mistakes. A final theme that emerged was related to the participants' relationship with women. There was an emphasis on respect and racial pride in terms of the participants' ideas about relationship with women (Gavazzi et al., 1996).

Reportedly, there is limited research data on the effectiveness of rites of passage programs. However, this study has generated some initial support for the utilization of culturally specific programs, particularly for African American males in out of home care. Furthermore, the data obtained may provide an incentive to investigate utilizing this type of program as a component of prevention and intervention programming (Gavazzi et al., 1996).

Moseley (2009) conducted an exploratory study to examine the lived experiences of African American men and women who had spent a significant part of their life in foster care and the effect it had on their adult development. The participants were nine African American men and women ages 25 to 55 (mean age of 43.3). The participants were identified as being raised in foster care for at least five years with no less than three changes in placement. All the participants aged out of care at age 18 or 21 without being adopted. They were all reported to be in good physical and mental health and legally and gainfully employed with evidence of progressive responsibility for at least three years.

Moseley (2009) described four themes that served to explain the lived experiences of the participants as a result of growing up in foster care. These included feeling thrown away while needing to belong, perceptions of memorable relationships while in care, navigating the pathways to resilience and finding meaning through reconciling the past and creating a future. The results of the study were discussed in terms of life-span exploration of the participants' experiences in foster care that included the time prior and during placement and at emancipation after placement.

The findings showed that the themes centered on how the participants navigated the multiple and complex relationships they were exposed to while in care, as well as what they learned about themselves and internalized based on messages they received in those relationships. Furthermore, the findings indicated that the development of coping strategies to manage those feelings and beliefs ultimately contributed to their resilience and survival (Moseley, 2009).

Timms (2009) conducted a study to examine the problem of disproportionality among African American children in foster care, which is a national problem. The study examined the issues that child welfare workers, community based case workers and parents felt contributed to the disproportionality. The findings revealed that single women and more specifically, African American mothers, are often prejudged and commonly treated as subordinates. Other findings further revealed how child welfare culture swings have forced changes in practices and decisions made by child welfare workers. As a result, child welfare workers are required to work with families to provide services within their community.

An essential part of effective intervention services with ethnic minority families and children includes recognizing their ethnic or cultural differences from the mainstream and maintaining or reinforcing the positive cultural aspects in the children's foster care situation. Children and families have basic cultural rights (Curtis, Dale, Jr., & Kendall, 1999).

Increased attention to the spiritual beliefs and needs of youth in foster care may be related to recent attention garnered by racial disproportionality in child welfare. In the diverse contexts and cultures represented by children of color in the system, spirituality is often integral to coping with various manifestations of historical and contemporary oppression, especially grief and loss. Spirituality is an important way to connect some youth to their culture, which gives them a sense of belonging, and in turn, connects the cultural communities to their youth (Jackson et al., 2010).

Studies have demonstrated that youth in and transitioning from care have a high degree of faith in a higher power and ascribe to many transitioning practices (Jackson et al., 2010). In a study done by Daining and DePanfilis (2007), they found that for transitioning youth, spiritual support, which is the extent to which the individual derives guidance, strength, and comfort from their faith, significantly contributed to a number of positive outcomes associated with resilience.

According to Mbiti (1975), religion is a universal part of human life and, therefore, may be of great value, otherwise most people by now would have abandoned it completely. It is evident that people spend a lot of their time and wealth on religion. This is evident in great buildings such as temples, cathedrals, churches and other sacred

places. Religion is a means of communication, has inspired great ideas, celebrates life and shows people their limitations.

Daughtery (2011) conducted a qualitative research study to understand identity development and spirituality in African American females who had been in foster care during adolescence. The sample size included ten women who indicated they were former foster children. During the interview process, respondents expressed that growing up in foster care had been hard, discussed the difficulty of trying to work on identity issues, lack of consistent positive adult interest in their lives and problems with identity development. Though spirituality as a dimension of identity development was not a focus of the research, what was found was that many women, unsolicited, expressed a belief in the importance of spirituality constructs to their understanding and acceptance of their life experiences in foster care and their general understanding of life.

Daughtery (2011) emphasized that limitations of this study included sample size, method of soliciting sample and the age range of respondents. However, the research demonstrates that responses related to identity development domain of spirituality need further study. Furthermore, this may identify a research area that could lead to better service delivery.

It is important to value adolescents' religious perspectives, whether they are from majority or minority religions. It also important to help adolescent continue to grow and develop spiritually. It is evident that our understanding of family and parenting has been shaped by our religious beliefs, both as individuals and as a nation. It is clear that religion was an important factor during the development of child welfare. Unfortunately, in recent

decades religion's role in child welfare has been overlooked by researchers and educators, even though it remains a major cultural influence (Schreiber, 2010).

There is some evidence that suggest that spirituality may be a pathway for positive youth development. Youth conceptions of spirituality may help them reach a level of transcendence. There is also evidence that youth who are concerned with themselves and do not recognize their connectedness to others may have a slower time developing the character traits that lead to positive youth development (James, Fine, & Turner, 2012).

James, Fine, and Turner (2012) conducted a study to understand how youth conceptualize spirituality in an effort to ascertain whether spirituality is an internal developmental asset for adolescent. The relationship between spirituality and positive youth outcomes was examined with a mixed method four step process. They first examined youth's conceptualization of what it means to be a spiritual young person. Secondly, they examined the concurrent relationship between spirituality and the five C's of positive youth development. A third process was to look at longitudinal effects of spirituality in positive youth development. Finally, they examine if religious identification moderates the relationship between spirituality and the five C's of positive youth development.

Positive youth development operates on the premise that all adolescents have the capacity to thrive, and is reflected in a series of meta-indicators called the five C's. The five C's are a list of character traits, and when enacted through behaviors of youth lead to a sixth C. The first C is competence, which refers to how effectively one functions in domain specific areas. Confidence, the second C, refers to one's global sense of self-

worth. The third C is connection, which refers to the individual's ability to build meaningful relationship with institutions within their environment (James et al., 2012; Zarrett & Lerner, 2008).

A fourth C of positive youth development is character. This refers to a respect for societal and cultural rules and a sense of right and wrong. A fifth C is compassion and caring. This involves concern for others and the ability to be empathetic. Contribution, the sixth C, refers to contribution to one's own need, as well as community, family and civil society (James et al., 2012; Zarrett & Lerner, 2008).

The study found that cross-sectionally, spirituality accounted for a significant amount of variance in all six C's examined, with high levels of spirituality being related to better youth outcomes. However, spirituality only accounted for a positive change in character scores over time. It seems that whether youth were religious or not had no concurrent or longitudinal effect on the relationship between spirituality and the six C's. Furthermore, youth in this sample indicated that being a spiritual young person as sometimes positive in nature (James et al., 2012).

Finally, the findings of this study provided empirical support to the number of assumptions that people have about the benefits of youth having a strong spiritual core. Findings also indicate that there is a foundation of youth constructed definitions and empirical evidence to advocate for spiritual development as a possible viable pathway to positive youth development (James et al., 2012).

Spirituality is often associated with resilient life outcomes and can be seen as a journey toward finding oneself. It is not religion, although religion often provides a

structure through which many can access spirituality. Spirituality often requires a person to extend beyond one's comfort zone in order to grow as a person (Ponds, 2014).

According to Ponds (2014), research on positive psychology indicates that spiritual strengths can be important in helping individuals overcome crisis and loss. Questions asked by youth concerning spirituality can be a means to enable them to gain understanding and develop a plan for spiritual growth. It is clear that the lack of control over one's life or circumstances is at the heart of spiritual crisis.

A spiritual growth plan can enable treatment and teaching staff and caregivers better understand young people in crisis. As stated by Ponds (2014), "Young people who are not connected with something greater than self can be confused about what is right or what is wrong and how to make positive life choices. Finding a sense of inner purpose is one of the primary gifts of spirituality" (p. 59).

Yeh, Borrero, and Shea (2011) discussed the role of spirituality in counseling culturally diverse youth in urban schools. They also discussed the evolving and complex relationship between youth and their spiritual beliefs, indicating they are interwoven with their multiple cultural, religious and academic identities. They used a case example of a seventeen year old Samoan female living in San Francisco. The purpose was to describe how school counselors and school systems can provide support for how students work on spiritual issues.

In the case study, the student had difficulty with her spiritual role affecting her education. Attending church regularly and other cultural traditions was a high expectation of her family. It was not until her grades were negatively affected that the school counselor became aware of the many stressors the student faced. Counseling

sessions provided the youth with a means of expressing her concerns (Yeh, Borrero, & Shea, 2011).

There is evidence that indicate schools and school counselors need to provide youth with opportunities to discuss their spiritual life, the impact it has on their identity, as well as its role in them being successful. The case example in this study demonstrated the important intersection of spirituality and students' identity and psychological well-being in school. It was noted that student experiences with spirituality should be considered in the context of the school community and surrounding society. This would include questions such as whether there are community resources that may cater to different cultural groups (Yeh et al., 2011).

The relevance of spirituality for culturally diverse youth in urban settings cannot be overlooked by school counselors. In terms of cultural context, it is imperative that schools provide support and space for youth to express their spiritual strengths, questions, and aspirations. Youth must not be forced to fit a certain mold if they are to succeed in school. Furthermore, it is important that cultural values and world views that are inclusive of spiritual identities and themes are seen as strengths and possibly coping strategies (Yeh et al., 2011).

According to Brittan (2011), many studies have demonstrated the link between supports and African American adolescents' mental health and behavioral outcomes, such as self-esteem and academic achievement. However, an explanation of the processes that occurs between supports, such as parents' socialization or social support from one's religious community, and the youth positive outcome is often ignored.

As explained in the study by Brittan (2011), developmental system theories (DST) provide a potential link by suggesting that supports lead to adaptive coping processes, while adaptive coping leads to the development of a positive identity, and in turn, youth are able to express productive coping outcomes. Furthermore, identity is bi-directionally linked to behaviors, meaning behavior stems from a consolidation of one's beliefs and values within one's social world, a relation that coalesces into coherent, continuous sense of self. Thus, the more one acts in ways that are consistent with such an identity, the identity will be strengthened.

It is apparent that there is a need for the child welfare system to broaden its purview and incorporate into policy and practice efforts that promote youth resilience by ensuring ties to their cultural heritage, sense of connection, belonging and purpose. Understanding the beliefs, values and practices youth in care embrace to strengthen themselves through trauma and uncertainty is an important element of culturally competent practice (Jackson et al., 2010).

It is also evident that having a sense of belonging and connections are tied to a development of a support system. A true support system is made up of trusting and meaningful relationships where you share yourself honestly with other people and they share themselves with you. While in foster care, many children learned that relationships were a one way street, meaning they learn to protect themselves by keeping things inside. Unfortunately, doing this creates the illusion that you are not trustworthy. However, being trustworthy is an important step in building meaningful relationship and learning to trust is just as important (Ecke et al., 2009).

Dvir, Weiner, and Kupermintz (2012) completed a study on the issue of children in residential group care in Israel completely without family ties in order to explore the feelings of staff and uncover possible characteristics of the children. Data was collected through focus groups, questionnaires, and life stories of children who left group care at 18 years of age. What they found was that the children's aloneness is central in their lives and arouses painful and powerful emotion that staff members tend to avoid. It was evident that facing the future alone without support and guidance led to major crisis during adolescence. It seemed that those who formed long-term, significant relationship with an adult fared better.

Finally, they learned that the children want to open the central issue of no family ties in their lives for discussion and to speak about their life stories. There is a need to integrate the treatment interventions, which may include preparing young people for family life and challenge them to see the establishment of a normative family as an important life value. Furthermore, there is a need to find either a host family or a lifelong trustee who will commit themselves to long-term relationships for these young people (Dvir, Weiner, & Kupermintz, 2012).

There is limited research assessing the effectiveness of family engagement for improving permanency for children. The debate about the potential usefulness of various forms of family engagement practices extends over two decades. Unfortunately, the discussion has occurred without the benefit of much data. As a result, this problem has limited understanding about how family engagement meetings may or may not contribute to better safety, permanency, and well-being outcomes for children who encounter the child welfare system (Crampton, Usher, Wildfire, Webster, & Cuccaro-Alamin, 2011).

Crampton, Usher, Wildfire, Webster, & Cuccaro-Alamin (2011) examined whether community and family engagement enhanced permanency for children in foster care. The results showed when and how family and community participation may facilitate permanency for children. Some of the findings indicated that the presence of other key participants and community supports may compensate to some degree for the absence of a parent in achieving a permanent placement with relatives or the family of origin. However, results vary by race and ethnicity of children. The results also showed that exposure to key elements of Family to Family (F2F) was significantly related to permanency for children from all racial and ethnic groups, but these results vary by race and ethnicity as well (Crampton et al., 2011).

The Family to Family is a national evaluation child welfare reform initiative sponsored by Annie E. Casey Foundation in approximately sixty sites across seventeen states (Crampton et al., 2011). The four basic principles that the F2F applies are, a child's safety is paramount, children belong in families, families need strong communities, and public child welfare systems need partnerships with the community and with other systems to achieve strong outcomes for children (Casey, 2009).

In the study by Crampton et al. (2011), findings also indicated that family engagement practice can increase permanency for children in foster care, are encouraging and suggest that family engagement can support a child's right to a permanent and safe home. Furthermore, the fact that these results vary by race and ethnicity has important implications for efforts to use family engagement to address disparate outcomes, the disproportionate number of children of color in foster care, and the right of children from different cultural backgrounds to permanency (Crampton et al., 2011).

Education in Foster Care

With the world's biggest economy, billions of dollars a year of government spending on education and social services, and outstanding public schools and universities, Americans expect that our young people can all realize their dreams and become productive citizens. For most children who grow up in healthy, supportive families, little stands in their way. But for the half million children and youth who reside in the nation's foster care system, the reality is more complicated and their future in doubt (Shirk & Strangler, 2006).

The set of laws governing education and child welfare are complex and often conflicting. Reportedly, social science literature chronicles three major obstacles to foster youth's educational progress. First of all, foster youth experience a lack of residential stability and often lose class time and credits as they change placements and schools. Secondly, foster youth suffer when education and child welfare system fails to effectively collaborate. Finally, the fact that foster youth has no active parental figure in their lives; they are often impaired by a lack of educational advocacy (Hahnel & Van Zile, 2012).

Blome (1997) used existing longitudinal data from 1980 through 1986 to investigate the high school and post high school experiences of a group of foster youth and a matched group of youth living with at least one parent. The sample size was a subset of 167 youth in foster care along with an equal number of non-foster care youth. The findings in this study indicated that foster youth dropped out of high school at a much higher rate, were significantly less likely to have completed a GED, and they received less financial assistance for education from their guardian. Reportedly, many

problems related to education were a direct result of consistently disruption in placement and school.

According to Blome (1997), when making protective decisions, the safety of the child is the primary concern and all other considerations become secondary. However, it is important that agencies train social workers to consider the impact of a school disruption when deciding on placement changes. It is imperative that social workers collaborate with teachers and foster parents to perhaps make special efforts to help youth maintain contact with friendships in old neighborhoods, if appropriate. Finally, more research is necessary to assure that policy and practice decisions concerning vulnerable children promote their well-being.

It is evident that children in foster care are a vulnerable population at risk for academic failure as well as internalizing and externalizing behavioral problems. When compared to their peers, research indicate that they are faced with significant educational difficulties, including lower levels of academic achievement, increased discipline referrals, and over representation in special education. In order to improve their educational outcomes, it is critical to recognize the unique needs of this population (Watson & Kabler, 2012).

Watson and Kabler (2012) reported that representatives from various organizations, including the National Association of School Psychologist (NASP) leaders, recently met in Washington, D.C., at the “Building Partnerships Implementing Change: Educational Stability for Students in Foster Care” conference. It was sponsored jointly by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, the National Education Association, and the Casey Family programs. The purpose was to have national dialogue to deepen

collaboration between education and child welfare groups and to identify possible solutions that will help students in foster care experience educational stability and reduce barriers to learning.

NASP leadership is currently working with educational and child welfare organizations to deepen the understanding of each system's role and responsibility under the Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoption Act of 2008 (PL110-351). Reportedly, there is growing recognition at the local and national levels concerning the need for schools to work collaboratively with home and child welfare agencies. The purpose is to help foster youth reach their full potential and become stable and self-supporting community members (Watson & Kabler, 2012).

Of the over 500,000 youth currently in foster care in the United States, approximately 50% graduate from high school. Of those students, only 10% to 20% enroll in college and less than 5% graduate. Compared to peers, foster youth draw from less stable social networks when seeking support for college aspirations due to the many times that youth in foster care change residences and schools. Lack of sustained support can be particularly detrimental (Corwin, 2008).

Without educational attainment or any family support system, foster youth have very few choices once they age out of care. Several studies show that education is one of very few reliable ways foster youth to avoid the adult outcome experienced by their peers. These may include poverty, substance abuse, childhood pregnancy, incarceration and welfare dependency. Many foster youth find themselves unequipped to succeed without educational attainment. Furthermore, it is reported that 75% of former foster

youth report earning less of than \$5,000 a year and 90% report earnings of less than \$10,000 a year. This is well below the poverty line (Hahnel & Van Zile, 2012).

Despite increased federal, state, and local efforts in the United States to improve outcomes among young adults who emancipated from foster care, low attainment of educational achievement continue to characterize this vulnerable subpopulation. As stated previously, approximately 50% of foster children do not obtain a high school diploma or GED (Rios, 2008).

Rios (2008) conducted a study to explore, describe and explain the perceptions of college students who had lived in foster care regarding the external and internal influences that impacted their academic achievement and attainment. Interviews were conducted with a purposefully selected sample of 24 Florida college students. What he found was that the participants experience a particular set of external and internal influences at school, in foster care settings, and in the community.

Reportedly, external influences included interactions with multiple nonrelative guardians and case workers, relatives, especially siblings, mentors, teachers and school administrators and school counselors. The internal influences included the barriers of anger and bad behavior and a newly identified set of internal characteristics, termed success strengths by the researcher, that promote academic achievement and college attainment (Rios, 2008).

There were several implications based on the results of this study. First of all, future theory on academic achievement concerning foster youth should reflect the importance of the affective aspect of school interactions. Secondly, policy should mandate awareness training for educators, social workers, and other adults who work

with former foster youth. The purpose is to increase professionals' awareness of the barriers, supports and success strengths that impact the academic lives of children and youth in foster care (Rios, 2008).

A third implication is that adult educators and human resource development professionals should develop and implement appropriate new education and training materials and interventions. Finally, a study with a nationally representative sample of former foster youth enrolled in college should be conducted to determine the relative importance of the barriers, supports and strengths identified in this study (Rios, 2008).

Studies indicate that foster youth enroll in higher education programs far less frequently than non-foster care youth. Factors that may be prominent in foster youth decision whether to attend college may include, the desire to be first in the family to obtain a degree, time management challenges, the presence or absence of a partner during the academic pursuit, and family members that may distract them from their goal. Other factors may include, whether or not there was a break between secondary and postsecondary education, hardship as motivators, and one's age at the beginning of a postsecondary pursuit (Herlocker, 2006).

It has also been reported that youth transitioning out of foster care indicate that, in general, there are four decision factors that they considered most strongly when investigating higher education options. These are the potential for increased income, independence, a career goal, and the desire for respect or status. Subsequently, the complexity of the admissions process, one's academic preparedness, and financial considerations were also important when considering postsecondary education (Herlocker, 2006).

Jones (2010) conducted a study to examine the post-discharge education and employment career of former foster youth. The specific interest was to assess the post-placement academic careers by identifying adjustment to college and identify strengths and needs of former foster youth who attend college. By describing the experiences of youth who pursued postsecondary education immediately upon discharged from foster care, researchers may understand factors that contributed to success or failure. Furthermore, this understanding may help inform those who work with former foster or current youth preparing for emancipation to develop programming that more closely meet their needs.

The findings indicated that the number of youth attending college at emancipation was higher than cited in other studies of discharged foster youth and remains relatively stable throughout the investigation. Findings also indicated that, as in other studies, the gap between youth aspirations for a college education and those who actually attended were great. Finally, a particular problem that foster youth faced was they may lose the supportive services they had in foster care. With this in mind, it is time that public policy recognizes this disparity and extends support for foster youth (Jones, 2010).

Changes in the United States economy have made the attainment of a higher education credential more important than ever to ensure self-sufficiency. Therefore, it is critical that the child welfare, K-12, and higher education systems encourage and support the postsecondary educational aspirations of youth in foster care. When the state makes the decision to remove a child from his/her biological home, it bears the responsibility to provide the educational guidance as well as assistance otherwise provided by families during the transition from high school to college (Day, 2011).

Fortunately, policy makers from Congress are sharpening their focus on the educational need of foster children, a population which has doubled in the past two decades. A focus on school readiness and school success may not heal all the damage already inflicted early in the lives of foster children, but it can give these children a fighting chance they deserve to thrive as adults. Furthermore, while the primary goal is to bring down the number of children in foster care, initiatives should also seek to improve school performance (Jacobson, 2008).

Previous research has demonstrated that former foster care youth are at risk for poor outcomes such as more problem behaviors, more depression, lower self-esteem, and poor social relationships. It is not clear, however, whether these findings reflect pre-emancipation developmental deficits. In a study of pre-emancipated youth, foster care youth reported higher levels of work orientation, but lower levels of academic achievement, aspirations, and expectations (Farruggia, Greenberger, Chen, & Heckhausen, 2006).

Shin (2003) conducted a study to explore factors that may impact the educational outcomes of youth in foster care. The population consisted of youth ages 16.5 and 17.5 years, who were in foster care in Illinois for an average of 8 years. The total sample size was 2,415 teens, with 64% African Americans, 28%% white, and 4% Hispanic. Forty-nine percent were males and 51% were females. Placement types included 24% in a traditional foster home, 27% in a group home or institutional care, 38% in a relative placement, and 11% in independent living.

The results of this study indicated that older foster youth experienced low educational achievement, disruptive education, and behavioral difficulties in completing

educational task. The study also revealed that youth in foster care who had received special educational services tended to score lower in the reading test. However, extracurricular activities and positive school experiences were positively associated with reading skills. Interestingly, youth who had higher education aspirations and better problem solving skills were more likely to score higher in reading achievement (Shin, 2003).

Findings also indicated that youth who were placed in a relative placement had significantly higher reading levels than those in a traditional foster home. There was also evidence that youth in foster care were influenced by many of the same factors that influence educational attainment of non-foster care youth. It appeared that placement in a relative home was the only factor in the placement domain that predicted educational attainment (Shin, 2003).

As suggested by this study, it is imperative that child welfare agencies provide more concrete academic assistance by building an academic monitoring systems and ensuring that foster youth finish high school and have access to higher education upon discharge from care. Findings also indicated that active participation in extracurricular activities has a strong association with healthy educational attainment and should be a focus of attention (Shin, 2003).

The adult outcomes of young people who have grown up in foster care have been an object of broad concern for many years. There have been numerous studies that indicate that these young people lagged behind their non-foster care peers on a number of socioeconomic indicators. Reportedly, educational attainment is viewed as a key development outcome and one that is highly associated with positive adult adjustment.

For most young people, the road to independence is a gradual process. However, for those young people exiting the foster care system, this can be a very traumatic experience (Snow, 2009).

Snow (2009) explored the educational and associated outcomes of young people exiting the foster care system. The purpose of the review was to examine the factors that impact the educational pathways of children in care and to validate the need for enhanced educational support. Studies that were considered for the review were research design, which included secondary data analysis of survey data, retrospective studies, surveys and longitudinal cohort studies.

According to Snow (2009), the educational passage of children in care is complex and often fragmented. It is evident that when considering the often dismal outcome of these young people in terms of educational progress, it is clear that a range of stressors is placed along their educational pathway. These may include a history of poverty and maltreatment, special education needs and developmental disabilities as well as the effect of the system of care.

Findings from this review mirrored other studies related to the educational outcomes of foster care alumni. These include the lack of appropriate educational services, particularly special educational needs; system coordination and effect such as repeated attachment rupture and separation of siblings; and multiple school changes which impact academic achievement. It is evident that services for children in out of home care should make a priority of educational continuity, consistency and appropriateness. Furthermore, optimizing these children's educational pathway is vital in

order to improve academic success. It is also imperative that schools are encouraged to play a central role in community support (Snow, 2009).

A major factor possibly contributing to educational success of former foster youth lies in the strength of their social support. Nearly 81% reported that they had either a friend or a family member to ask for help or advice if needed. Nearly 60% also reported that their current friends included people they knew in foster care and most still maintained contact with foster parent, group home, or kin-care parents. Additionally, 80% of respondents had contact with their birth family. At the same time, results indicate that although the youth are successful academically, they may be vulnerable in other areas (Merdinger, Hines, Osterling, & Wyatt, 2005).

The education of children in foster care is often over looked. This is due to the fact that the courts and dependency care system focus on the crisis that brings the family to court and on finding a safe haven for the child. Yet children in foster care are one of the most educationally vulnerable populations in our schools (Zetlin, Weiberg, & Shea, 2006). Despite our knowledge of poor educational outcomes for youth in foster care, the literature on methods or models for addressing the needs of this vulnerable group of students remains extremely limited (Tyre, 2012).

Tyre (2012) conducted a study to describe a school-based educational support model that provides advocacy, tutoring, and mentoring for middle school youth involved in the foster care system. Preliminary outcomes for youth served were explored, with an emphasis on the use of curriculum-based measures for identifying skill deficits and monitoring progress in basic reading skills.

The findings indicated that youth served demonstrated practically significant growth in basic reading skill at a level necessary to close the gap between their middle school peers' reading skills. Based on preliminary outcomes, it was suggested that this model holds promise for addressing the educational needs of youth in foster care (Tyre, 2012).

In an effort to meet the educational needs of youth in foster care, it is recommended that social workers and educators establish an effective collaborative partnership. First of all, all parties would benefit from an exchange of information about their respective systems. Secondly, procedures should be established to ensure effective communication regarding the needs of individual youth. Thirdly, social workers and educators should collaborate to ensure that youth in care receive educational supports by including caregivers in educational planning meetings, identifying areas of need through academic screening measures, and linking youth to intervention programs placed in the school and the community. Finally, it is important to plan for transition of youth into adulthood, which may include college and career planning, vocational training, and life skills instruction (Tyre, 2012).

The typical strategy in examining the effect foster care has on educational outcomes is to compare the educational achievement of youth with foster care experience to that of their peers or to national norms. This strategy fails to take selection bias into account and thus findings based on this research can be misleading. Many studies also fail to provide information regarding how the experience of foster care may have contributed to low educational achievement (Calix, 2009).

The findings in a study by Calix (2009) suggest that youth with foster care experience score lower on test and are less likely to pass than youth without foster care experience. The study also suggests that characteristics and variations based on the foster care experience such as race, reason for placement, age at entry, length of time in foster care, and the number of foster care placement settings are related to low educational achievement. According to Salazar (2013), few studies follow foster care alumni into adulthood and even fewer breakdown adult outcomes by attained education level. Furthermore, little documentation exists to show how foster care alumni college graduates are faring in their young lives, compared with the general population of young adult college graduates.

Havalchak, White, O'Brien, Pecora, & Sepulveda (2009) conducted a study to explore the educational outcomes of young adults who were formerly in foster care. One of the things they found was that some foster care experiences were found to significantly predict educational outcomes. These include feeling safe in care, receiving supplemental foster care services, number of placements, and number of social workers. It was also reported that factors that hinder as well as support educational success include timely transfer of transcripts, the relationship between educators and social workers, foster parent, as well as social worker involvement in the educational needs of foster youth. Furthermore, it seems that having a friend or family member available for support made a difference in educational attainment for foster youth.

Over the past 20 years, research has consistently shown that children in out of home care fall behind in school. There is also indication that they seldom achieve good

qualification and are less likely than their peers to pursue higher education. However, there is a small number that do well academically (Martin & Jackson, 2002).

Martin and Jackson (2002) examined the opinions of 38 high achieving former foster alumni in an effort to ascertain what they thought were the best ways to enhance the educational experience of children in foster care. These young people had spent at least a year in residential or foster care placement. A semi-structured interview based on the evaluation of four key questions highlighted the importance of foster parents, residential workers, social workers and teachers in providing support and encouragement for academic achievement.

The findings were based on the questions answered by the participants. All respondents were asked to identify main things that should be done to improve educational opportunities for children in foster care. Most of the respondents stressed the importance of normalization in children's day-to-day lives. They suggested that children in foster care should be given the freedom, support and finance to take part in outside hobbies and interest. In terms of encouragement from others, 75% of participants stressed the vital importance of residential staff and foster parents showing an active interest in their education and providing them support and encouragement to do well. They also indicated that having a mentor or role model would be helpful, noting that this individual should have a consistent relationship with the child over time (Martin & Jackson, 2002).

The participants were asked to identify the contribution of social workers, teachers and school support. Findings indicated that more than a quarter of participants emphasized the importance of having a good relationship with their social worker. They stressed the need to be able to maintain regular contact with the social worker for support

and advice and the importance of the social worker showing genuine concern for their welfare. In terms of teachers and school support, 76% indicated the need for more support from teachers. There were a few participants that commented on the need to ensure that teachers are aware of the unfair label of disruptiveness or low intelligence often placed on foster children (Martin & Jackson, 2002).

Finally, in terms of resources, 58% of the participants commented on the lack of practical resources available in residential homes. They indicated that many homes lack basic necessities such as books, and a desk or quiet area where they could do homework or study. When participants were questioned about higher education, 74% stressed that more financial help was needed and 45% indicated problems with accommodations, particularly when dorms are closed for the holidays, thus leaving the student with no place to go (Martin & Jackson, 2002).

It is evident that more attention should be paid to the educational experiences and attitudes of foster care providers. It should be quite clear that promoting children's educational attainment is a major part of their role. Furthermore, they should be provided with maximum support in achieving this, such as having the financial resources to provide for children placed in their care. It is apparent that policy initiatives do not invariably result in significant improvements on the ground. However, it is clear that the only people who can really tell us if there are any improvements in the educational experiences of children in foster care are those receiving them and they should be heard (Martin & Jackson, 2002).

Harker, Dobel-Ober, Lawrence, Berridge, and Sinclair (2003) completed a study with a sample of 80 children and youth between the ages of 10-18 regarding their

educational experience while in foster care. The participants resided in foster and residential placements in England for at least three months. The interview included both open and closed ended questions in an effort to assess the participants' current educational progress and identify individuals who supported or hindered their education, as well as the availability of educational supports.

Findings indicated that children described their educational progress as better than average. However, 24% described their educational progress as going poorly, which they contributed to the degree of instability associated with being in care. Reportedly, 45% believed that their educational progress had improved since being in care. It should be noted that those participants who did not believe that being in care impacted their education progress, commented that they had been in care so long that it was difficult to judge whether a difference had been made (Harker, Dobel-Ober, Lawrence, Berridge, & Sinclair, 2003).

The results of this study indicated that providing support for children to achieve academically is an important function of teachers and social workers. Seventy-eight percent of the participants were able to give examples of individuals who had supported their educational progress. Sixty percent of the participants mentioned individuals who they believed hindered their educational progress. Reportedly, the most common individual was the social worker. The participants believed that the social worker did not appear to be aware of the impact of repeated moves had on their educational progress and that the social worker lack interest in their education as a hold (Harker et al., 2003).

It is encouraging that a large proportion of the sample in this study indicated that they are progressing well educationally. However, there remains a significant proportion

that indicates they are doing poorly. As observed in previous research, the common theme describing poor educational outcomes for children in foster care are due to placement instability, school transfers, stress of entering the system, lack of supports and negative stereotyping of children in foster care (Harker et al., 2003).

It is evident that many youth in foster care face barriers that affect their current and future personal success. However, studies continue to indicate that an emphasis must be placed on collaboration between schools and child protective services. Furthermore, efforts to improve educational outcomes for children and youth in foster care must persist (Cox, 2012).

According to Williamson (2013), avenues in an education system by which support can be provided to students in foster care would include surveying their community for resources that may be helpful, assist them with establishing a relationship with the school counselor, and perhaps involvement with extracurricular activities. It is important to note that statistics indicate that these students experience several moves while in care. As a result, by the time they reach their senior year in high school, some may have attended as many as eleven schools. These repeated moves can make life very complicated and can cause difficulties forming lasting bonds with peers and adults, as well as impact their education.

Crawford, Tilbury, Creed, and Buys (2011) conducted a qualitative study to seek the views of young people in care, foster and kinship providers, and child protection caseworkers about career development for youth in care. They used social cognitive career theory to provide a framework, which identifies three key variables to career

development that need to be examined. These included career self-efficacy, career outcome expectations and career goals.

The findings indicated that foster youth described minimal parental influence on their career exploration and development. It seems that they relied on their own resources, or they identified delegated adults such as caseworkers and/or foster or kinship providers. These young people valued assistance with career planning from caseworkers and encouragement and practical support from providers. However, researchers found few systematic processes, resources, skilled personnel, and programs to promote career development for youth in care. Career development is an important process that requires self-understanding, exploration of options, and planning to achieve goals. Therefore, it is imperative that the system of care promote better employment outcomes and must also become more future oriented (Crawford, Tilbury, Creed, & Buys, 2011).

Each year more than 20,000 alumni age out of foster care. These are alumni who exit the foster care system because they reach the age of 18, not because they are reunited with their families, are adopted, or leave to attend college. Prior longitudinal research has shown that the nearly 80% of the alumni who are emancipated at 18 years of age failed to obtain a high school diploma (Harrison-Jackson, 2009). Although a college education continues to increase in importance in U.S. society, reaching this level of attainment often seems out of reach for many youth who have been in foster care. Therefore, policy and practice should focus on effective means of supporting post-college stability for youth with foster care experience (Salazar, 2013).

Salazar (2013) conducted a study to compare the outcomes of 250 foster care alumni college graduates with two samples of general population graduates to explore the

role higher education plays in these young adults' lives. In this study, outcomes compared included employment, income, housing, public assistance, physical and mental health, happiness, and other outcomes related to educational attainment.

The findings revealed that foster care alumni college graduates were very similar to general population of college graduates for individual income and rate of employment. However, foster care alumni college graduates were behind the general population of graduates on factors such as self-reported job security, household earnings, health, mental health, financial satisfaction, home ownership, happiness, and public assistance usage. It was also noted that the most prominent problem suggested by the findings of this study was that it appears that even after successfully achieving a higher education, foster care alumni continue to be members of struggling households (Salazar, 2013).

A study done by McMillan, Auslander, Elze, White, and Thompson (2003) documented the school experiences of 262 youth referred for independent living preparation from foster care system. Of the youth, 73% had been suspended at least once since the seventh grade, and 16% had been expelled. In the past year, 58% had failed a class, and 29% had physical fights with students. Yet the group reported high educational aspiration with 70% wanting to go to college. The results indicate the need for a system of educators that advocate for appropriate educational needs of foster youth and ensure they receive needed academic resources. According to Beisse and Tyre (2013), there is evidence that caregiver involvement in foster youth education may play a significant role in educational success.

As explained in the study done by Beisse and Tyre (2013), in an effort to overcome barriers to educational success, children in foster care need caring and

knowledgeable adults who can provide the educational supports they need. While previous research with foster caregivers has examined caregiver role perceptions, satisfaction, and needs for training and support, there is limited research specifically investigating caregiver involvement in the education of youth in foster care.

Recent studies have described the poor educational outcomes of many youth who emancipate from foster care. Many of these youth leave foster care without the ability to function as healthy, self-sufficient adults and as a result are at risk of unemployment, poverty, incarceration, homelessness, and other negative outcomes. African American and older children are particularly vulnerable to harmful systemic impacts on their educational progress. Chi square and logistic regression analyses suggest that children of different ages, races, mental health status, and a history of maltreatment face differing challenges to educational success after entering the foster care system (Lynn, 2006).

It is evident that there are a disproportionate number of African American children in foster care. With this in mind, it is no secret that there are great disparities in the academic achievement and success between African Americans and Caucasians. Though there have been scores of theoretical and empirical examinations, the more popular point seems to indicate inadequacy of African American parents or destructive forces within the community (Lynn, 2006).

In a study done by Duke (2008), racial and gender biases within the schooling process was examined in order to provide cogent evidence that schools are reproduction systems of caste and racial stratification. The plight of low income African American males was the focus of this research because they are affected disproportionately by the social inequalities of the American educational system and suffer the most in regards to

the process of schooling. The findings indicated that when an individual's academic possible selves are skewed, negative, or constantly focused on the feared self, educational achievement will be hard to foster.

As stated previously, it has been reported that in this country, the academic experiences of African American males in foster care are unlike the experiences of any group in or outside the foster care system. They are subject to the same barriers as the academic experiences of many African American males, yet they are unique due to their foster care status. A study was conducted to examine impediments to academic achievement of African American males in foster care (Tate, 2001).

The data was collected from the Ohio Proficiency Test and from questionnaires distributed to foster parents and social workers. Test scores for African American males in foster care were compared to test scores for a number of other groups on the fourth, sixth, and ninth grade proficiency tests. Foster parents and social workers were asked to rate the impact of various aspects of foster care on academic achievement for African American males in foster care. Reportedly, the study showed that African American males in foster care achieved consistently lower scores than the comparison groups on most portions of the proficiency test, and differences were significant in many cases (Tate, 2001).

Based on the findings of this study, it was recommended that educators and child welfare representatives collaborate to develop policies and programs designed to support the inordinate needs of African American males in foster care. These should include tutorials, workshops, additional preparation for proficiency tests, and inclusion in after school programs based in the African American community. Furthermore, it was argued

that support of this nature is essential if African American males in foster care are to achieve greater academic success (Tate, 2001).

William and Bryan's (2013) study of African American high school graduates from low-income, single parent families found that factors that increase academic success included, supportive school-based relationships and culturally relevant caring, social support networks, and positive parent-child relationships. They also found that partnerships with African American organizations and programs can provide culturally responsive sources of meaningful activities.

Research has also found that having a mentor, particularly adults from the adolescents' preexisting social networks, may contribute to educational success as well as racial identity development. It was evident that having this type of mentor directly contributed to stronger beliefs in the importance of school for future success (Hurd, Sanchez, Zimmerman, & Caldwell, 2012).

Teaching students from different cultural backgrounds is a challenge that requires multicultural educators to handle with care, skills and knowledge about motivational and learning processes of ethnically different students. It is important to understand the culture difference of students from their own culture perspective, and simultaneously take their present sociocultural context into consideration. Without such understanding, teachers may risk employing culturally inappropriate strategies to motivate students to learn (Salili & Hoosain, 2001).

As explained in the study by Tate (2001), the social studies has incontrovertible opportunities and obligations to provide culturally sensitive learning opportunities for students of diverse backgrounds. It is evident that culturally competent pedagogy

involves the use of instructional practices that are grounded in an awareness of the academic needs of students outside the mainstream. Furthermore, the social studies permit instructors to successfully adopt content and methods that meet students at their respective cultural levels, thus creating greater opportunities for academic achievement.

In his 1933 publication, *The Mis-Education of the Negro*, Carter G. Woodson explained:

The educational system of a country is worthless unless it accomplishes its task. The education of any people should begin with the people themselves. The program for the uplift of the Negro in this country must be based upon a scientific study of the Negro from within to develop in him the power to do for himself. To educate the Negro we must find out exactly what his background is, what he is today, what his possibilities are, and how to begin with him as he is and make him a better individual of the kind that he is. Instead of cramming the Negro's mind with what others have shown that they can do, we should develop his latent powers that he may perform in society a part of which others are not capable (pp. 21, 93-94, 97).

It is clear that although communities have become increasingly frustrated over the schools' ability to educate African American urban children, particularly young men; they differ greatly in their opinions about such programs that separate these young men from the mainstream student body. It is evident that many believe that they should provide better training for parents and teachers. However, others believe that better leadership in the schools systems will ensure that African American males will be

afforded a quality education in a supportive learning environment. Finally, regardless of the strategy that is employed, it is evident that something needs to take place (Wynn, 1992).

A study by Roberts (2010) suggested that teacher caring for students should be an integral part of teaching methods. Though having state of the art equipment in the classroom is beneficial, providing a caring classroom is just as important in helping students succeed. Teachers in this study consistently recounted behavior that clearly displayed a belief that African American children should be cared for in ways that differ from Caucasian children.

Teachers in this study also expressed concern for African American students' future by communicating with clarity concerning the color blind, equal opportunity myths, which is perpetuated in schools about their opportunities for success. The belief is that this type of caring for African American students was necessary in order that they may experience more success with realistic challenges due to the prevalence of racism and hegemonic influences in American society (Roberts, 2010).

Roberts (2010) concluded that although teacher responses in the study may implicate it as a type of African American teacher care pedagogy, there still may be unexplained complexities underlying this implication. Roberts went on to state that, "the emergent themes of political clarity and concern for student future seems important, even essential, pieces in providing an education that values the cultures and addresses the concern of African American students" (p. 463).

It has been reported that racial biases in teacher's perceptions and expectations of the behaviors of African American male students may account for their disproportionate

reports of behavioral adjustments problems in the classroom. There is also evidence that African American male students may be judged by their movement styles and cultural expressions as a sign of lower intelligence and higher aggression (Thomas, Coard, Stevenson, Bentley, & Zamel, 2009).

Thomas, Coard, Stevenson, Bentley, and Zamel (2009) conducted a study to investigate the predictive influence of students' reactive emotional coping and racial socialization experiences on teachers' perceptions of classroom behavior adjustment problems. The participants in this study were 148 African American male youth attending a secondary school in a large northeastern city and the teachers of these students. The school from which the sample was drawn included a diverse teaching staff, however most of the teachers were African American and 99% of the student population was African American.

The findings showed that rejection sensitivity, anger expression, and racial socialization were all important determinants for teacher perceptions of behavioral over activity for African American male youth. It was also evident that overt anger and anger impression management were both significant predictors of teacher perceptions of student's overall behavioral adjustments. However, their effects were largely determined by how aware the youth were to biases levied against them. Findings also suggest that participants who were better able to suppress their anger resulted in teachers having more favorable impressions of their classroom behaviors (Thomas et al., 2009).

This study implies a need for more research to examine the interplay between individual emotional coping strategies, racial socialization processes, and the behavior options chosen by African American students. In addition, research should examine other

sociocultural factors that may affect the behavioral adjustments of African American youth in school beyond the influence of the family. It should be noted that teachers are not immune from being influence by overgeneralizations based on culture differences. They are also susceptible to bringing their cultural beliefs and preconceived notions concerning the misinterpretation of the anger of African American males with them to the classroom (Thomas et al., 2009).

According to Hurd et al. (2012), as researchers have begun to investigate relations between the various elements of racial identity and educational outcomes, they have found that racial centrality and regard for one's racial group have demonstrated relevance to academic achievement among African American adolescents. Furthermore, it seems that African American adolescents that perceive low public regard for their racial group may engage with school less because they are less likely to see education as an opportunity for advancement.

According to Harper and Davis, III (2012), research indicated that from 1977-2007, African American males experienced a 109% increase in post-baccalaureate degree attainment, compared to 242% for Latino males and 425% for Asian American males. With this in mind, they conducted a study to explore what compels African American male students to care about education, despite what is consistently reported in the literature regarding their gradual disinvestment in schooling. Participants in the study included 304 African American males. The study was based largely on a 650 word essay.

The findings showed that African American males do care about education. The participants in the study maintained a firm belief in the liberating potential of education, despite their recognition of how school, post-secondary institutions, and policies unfairly

disadvantage them and others in their community. Though participants indicated that they had few African American teachers, they had a desire to invest in a system that was overwhelmingly white and persistently unresponsive to African American learners. Thus, those who have been disadvantaged by schools, colleges, and policies could be empowered and recruited to make improvements (Harper & Davis, III, 2012).

Theoretical Framework

Study show that a significant portion of youth exiting the foster care system face serious difficulty transitioning to life on their own. Many live on streets, lack the money to meet basic living expenses, fail to maintain regular employment, are involved with the criminal justice system, are unable to obtain health care, and experience early pregnancies. Although youth reported exposure to independent living training while in care, few reported concrete assistance. While in care, multiple placements and less education correlated with more difficult post discharge functioning (Reilly, 2003).

The theoretical framework for this study was based on Albert Bandura' Social Learning Theory. The social learning theory proposed by Albert Bandura has become the most influential theory of learning and development. While rooted in many of the basic concepts of traditional learning theory, Bandura believed that direct reinforcement could not account for all types of learning (Cherry, 2012).

In the social learning theory, there are three core concepts at the heart. First is the idea that people can learn through observation. In one study, Bandura demonstrated that children imitate behaviors they have observed in other people. Bandura identified three basic models of observational learning. These include a live model which involves an

actual individual demonstrating or acting out a behavior; a verbal instructional model which involves describing or explaining a behavior; and a symbolic model which involves real or fictional characters displaying behaviors in books or movies (Cherry, 2012).

The second concept of social learning theory is the idea that the internal mental states are an essential part of this process. Bandura noted that external, environment reinforcement was not the only factor to influence learning and behavior. He described intrinsic reinforcement as a form of internal reward, such as pride, satisfaction, and a sense of accomplishment (Cherry, 2012).

Finally, the third concept of social learning theory recognizes that just because something has been learned does not mean that it will result in a change in behavior. Not all behaviors are learned effectively. Factors involving both the model and the learner can play a role in whether social learning is successful. These include attention, retention, reproduction and motivation. All these are key steps involved in the observational and modeling process (Cherry, 2012).

A secondary theoretical approach used is Erik Erikson's theory of Psychosocial Development. The Psychosocial theory provides a rich, thought-provoking structure within which to explore major issues of growth and development across the life span. It combines three powerful features that are not clearly articulated or integrated in other analyses of development (Newman & Newman, 1991).

First of all, the theory addresses growth across the life span. It identifies and differentiates among issues of central importance from infancy through old age. Secondly, the theory assumes that we are not totally at the mercy of biological and

environmental influences; we have the capacity to contribute to our own psychological development at every stage of life. The theory assumes that people integrate, organize, and conceptualize their own experiences in such a way as to protect them and direct the course of their own lives (Newman & Newman, 1991).

Finally, the third feature is that the theory takes into consideration the active contribution of culture to individual growth. More specifically, the theory states that at each life stage, cultural goals and aspirations, social expectations and requirements, and the opportunities that the culture provides make demands on individuals. These demands draw forth reactions which influence the system within the person's capabilities which will be developed. This vital link between the individual and the world is a key mechanism of development (Newman & Newman, 1991).

The development of ego identity is one of the main elements of Erikson's psychosocial stage theory. According to Erikson, our ego identity is constantly changing due to new experience and information we acquire in our daily interaction with others. Erikson also believed that a sense of competence also motivates behaviors and actions and that each stage is concerned with becoming competent in an area of life. In Erikson psychosocial stages, the premise is if a person handles a stage well, the person will feel a sense of mastery, but if not the person will emerge with a sense of inadequacy (Cherry, 2012).

In each stage, Erikson believed that people experienced conflict that serves as a turning point in development. According to Erikson, these conflicts are centered on either developing a psychological quality or failing to develop that quality. It is during these

times that the potential for growth is high, but is also the potential for failure (Cherry, 2012).

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Chapter III presents the methods and procedures that were used in conducting the outcome evaluation. The following are described in this chapter: research design, description of the site, sample population, instrumentation, treatment of data, and limitations of the study.

Research Design

Both descriptive and exploratory research was used in this study. This study was designed to ascertain data in order to describe and explain the relationship between culture and education among African American males who are likely to age out of foster care in the state of Alabama.

The descriptive and exploratory research design allowed for the analysis of the demographic profile of the survey respondents. The research design also facilitated the explanation of the statistical relationship between culture and education of the respondents who were likely to age out of foster care in the state of Alabama.

Description of the Site

The study was conducted in the state of Alabama. The surveys were administered by the principle investigator at Alabama's 2014 Annual Independent Living Conference

at Shocco Springs Conference Center in Talladega, Alabama. The site was selected because the target population was readily available. Also, another reason for selecting the aforementioned site was because the administrators and staff were cooperative, accessible and showed a genuine interest in the purposed research.

Sample and Population

The target population for this research study was composed of youth ages 14-20 who were currently in foster care. One hundred and thirty-seven (137) respondents were selected utilizing non-probability convenience sampling from among the target population.

Instrumentation

The research study employed a survey questionnaire entitled *Culture and Education Among African American Males*. The Survey questionnaire consisted of two sections with a total of fifteen (15) questions. Section I solicited demographic information about the characteristics of the respondents. Section II employed a research design that was developed by the principle investigator in order to measure culture and education among the respondents.

Section I of the survey questionnaire consisted of seven questions. Of the seven questions, selected questions were used as the independent variables for the study. The questions in Section I were concerned with gender, age group, racial category, education, length of time in foster care, living arrangement and number of siblings. The aforementioned questions provided information for the presentation of a demographic profile of the respondents of the survey.

Section II consisted of eight questions to measure culture and education (8 thru 15). Section II utilized a survey instrument that was developed and designed by the principle investigator based on the vast knowledge and experience obtained from working with this type of population. It measured to what extent that culture and education had on youth in foster care. Items on the survey instrument were responded to on a four point continuum Likert scale. The scale was as follows: 1=Strongly Disagree; 2=Disagree; 3=Agree; 4=Strongly Agree.

Treatment of Data

The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to analyze the data. The analysis used descriptive statistics, which included frequency distribution and cross tabulation. The test statistic used for this study were phi and chi squared.

Frequency distributions were used to analyze and summarize each of the variables in the study. A frequency distribution of demographic data was also used to gain insight about the respondents of the study.

Cross tabulations were utilized to demonstrate the statistical relationship between the independent variables and dependent variable. Cross tabulations were conducted between being a religious person and involved in social groups, good understanding of ethnic background and belief in strong family ties, and valuing schools and feeling good about furthering education among youth in foster care in the state of Alabama.

Two test statistics will be employed. The first test was Phi (Φ), which is a symmetric measure of association that is used to demonstrate the strength of relationship between two or more variables. The following values are associated with phi:

.00 to .24	“no relationship”
.25 to .49	“weak relationship”
.50 to .74	“moderate relationship”
.75 to 1.00	“strong relationship”

The second test statistic that the researcher utilized was chi square. Chi Square was used to test whether there was a significant statistical significance at the .05 level of probability among the variables in the study.

Limitations of the Study

There were three basic limitations of the study. The first limitation was the limited number of participants available for the study. The second limitation was that youth with any type of behavioral issues or medical problems were not available to participate in the study. The third limitation is that the questionnaire has not been used in the past, as it was developed and designed by the principle investigator.

CHAPTER IV

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

The purpose of this chapter was to present the findings of the study in order to describe and explain the relationship between culture and education among African American males in the state of Alabama who were likely to age out of foster care. This chapter presents the findings of the study. The findings are organized into two sections: demographic data and research questions and hypotheses.

Demographic Data

This section provides a profile of the study respondents. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the following: gender, age group, ethnicity, education, length of time the respondent had been in foster care, respondents living arrangement, and the respondent's number of siblings.

A target population for this research was composed of youth, ages 14-20 who were in foster care in the state of Alabama. One hundred and thirty-seven youth were selected utilizing non-probability convenience sampling from among the participants of the selected site.

Table 1

Demographic Profile of Study Respondents (N = 137)

Variable	Frequency	Percent
Gender		
Male	59	43.1
Female	78	56.9
Age Group		
14-15	32	23.4
16-17	69	50.4
18-20	36	26.3
Ethnicity		
White	34	24.8
African-American	85	62.0
Latino	4	2.9
Other	14	10.2
Education		
In Middle School	7	5.1
In High School	95	69.3
High School Graduate	22	16.1
GED Graduate	4	2.9
Some College	9	6.6

Table 1 (continued)

Variable	Frequency	Percent
Length of Time in Foster Care		
Less than 6 months	14	10.2
7-12 months	24	17.7
1-3 years	38	27.7
More than 3 years	61	44.5
Living Arrangement		
Foster Home	68	49.6
Group Home	42	30.7
Residential	3	2.2
Relative Placement	13	9.5
Independent Living	11	8.0
Number of Siblings		
None	6	4.4
1-3	63	46.0
5 or more	68	49.6

As indicated in Table 1, the typical respondent of the study was an African-American female, between the ages of 16-17 years, in high school, had been in foster care more than 3 years, resided in a foster home, and had five or more siblings.

Table 2

I am a religious person

Attribute	Frequency	Percent
Disagree	30	21.9
Agree	107	78.1
Total	137	100.0
Mean 2.78	Std. Dev .415	

Table 2 indicates that 78.1% of the respondents agreed that they considered themselves as a religious person.

Table 3

I am involved in social groups in my community

Attribute	Frequency	Percent
Disagree	55	40.1
Agree	82	59.9
Total	137	100.0
Mean 2.60	Std. Dev .492	

Table 3 indicated that 59.9% of the respondents agreed that they were involved in social groups within their community.

Table 4

I believe strong family ties are important

Attribute	Frequency	Percent
Disagree	17	12.4
Agree	120	87.6
Total	137	100.0
Mean 2.88	Std. Dev .331	

Table 4 indicated that 87.6% of the respondents agreed that they believed that strong family ties were important.

Table 5

I have a good understanding of my ethnic background

Attribute	Frequency	Percent
Disagree	17	12.4
Agree	120	87.6
Total	137	100.0
Mean 2.88	Std. Dev .331	

Table 5 indicated that 87.6% of the respondents agreed that they had a good understanding of their ethnic background.

Table 6

I believe schools are important for communities

Attribute	Frequency	Percent
Disagree	6	4.4
Agree	131	95.6
Total	137	100.0
Mean 2.96	Std. Dev .205	

Table 6 indicated that 95.6% of the respondents agreed that schools were important for the community.

Table 7

I believe education is important

Attribute	Frequency	Percent
Disagree	5	3.6
Agree	132	96.4
Total	137	100.0
Mean 2.96	Std. Dev .188	

Table 7 indicated that 96.4% of the respondents agreed that education was important.

Table 8

I plan to go to college

Attribute	Frequency	Percent
Disagree	8	5.8
Agree	129	94.2
Total	137	100.0
Mean 2.94	Std. Dev .235	

Table 8 indicated that 94.2% of the respondents agreed that they plan to go to college.

Table 9

I feel good about furthering my education

Attribute	Frequency	Percent
Disagree	8	5.8
Agree	129	94.2
Total	137	100.0
Mean 2.94	Std. Dev .235	

Table 9 indicated that 94.2% of the respondents agreed that they feel good about furthering their education.

In sum, the majority of the respondents had a positive attitude indicating that they consider themselves as a religious person, were involved in social groups in the community, believe in strong family ties and have a good understanding of their ethnic background. Also, the majority of the respondents agreed that education was important, planned to go to college and felt good about furthering their education. The majority of the respondents were African Americans.

Culture among African Americans

According to this study culture among African Americans are defined by four variables. These variables are indications of being a religious person; who is involved in social groups in their community; having strong family ties and having a good understanding of their ethnic background. Culture was computed from these four variables as follows: $(RELIGI+GROUPS+FAMILY+UNDERS)/4$. Also, the computed variable of culture was used in the test statistics of the research questions and hypotheses.

Table 10

Culture beliefs among research participants

Attribute	Frequency	Percent
Disagree	37	27.0
Agree	100	73.0
Total	137	100.0
Mean 2.72	Std. Dev .445	

Table 10 indicated that 73.0% agreed that the definition above indicated their understanding of culture in their community. Of the respondents the majority (62.0%) represents African Americans, with 28.2% being African American males.

Education among African Americans

According to this study education among African Americans are defined by four variables. These variables are indications that schools are important for communities; that education is important; plans to go to college and feeling good about furthering their education. Education was computed from these four variables as follows: $(\text{SCHOOL} + \text{IMPORT} + \text{COLLEG} + \text{MYEDUC})/4$. Also, the computed variable of education was used in the test statistics of the research questions and hypotheses.

Table 11

Education beliefs among research participants

Attribute	Frequency	Percent
Disagree	9	6.6
Agree	128	93.4
Total	137	100.0
Mean 2.93	Std. Dev .248	

Table 11 indicated that 93.4% agreed that the definition above indicated their understanding of education beliefs in their community. Of the respondents, the majority (62.0%) represents African Americans, with 28.5% being African American males.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

Research Question 1: Is there a statistically significant relationship between culture and education among youth who are likely to age out of foster care in the state of Alabama?

Hypothesis 1: There is no statistically significant relationship between culture and education among youth who are likely to age out of foster care in the state of Alabama.

Table 12 is a cross tabulation of education of foster care youth by culture beliefs among participants. It shows the association between education and culture beliefs of

youth in foster care and indicates whether or not there is a statistically significant relationship between the two variables.

Table 12

Education of foster care youth by culture beliefs among participants

		<u>Education</u>					
		Disagree		Agree		Total	
		#	%	#	%	#	%
<u>Culture of Youth</u>	Disagree	8	5.8	29	21.2	37	27.0
	Agree	1	0.7	99	72.3	100	73.0
	Total	9	6.6	128	93.4	137	100.0
Phi = .370		df = 1		Chi Square = .000			

As indicated in Table 12, only 27.0% of the respondents disagreed with culture and education as being important. A majority of the respondents (73.0%) indicated that culture and education as being important. A majority (62.0%) of the respondents were African American. As a result of a cross tabulation of ethnicity and gender, it was noted that a majority of the respondents (33.6%) were African American females and 28.5% were African American males. Also, the cross tabulation showed that of the respondents 57.7% of the African Americans agreed that education was important and 45.3% agreed that culture was important.

As shown in Table 12, the statistical measurement phi (Φ) was employed to test for the strength of association between education and culture beliefs of youth in foster care. As indicated, there was a weak relationship ($\Phi = .370$) between the two variables. When chi-square statistical test for significance was applied, the null hypothesis was rejected ($p = .000$) indicating that there was a statistically significant relationship between the two variables at the .05 level of probability.

Research Question 2: Is there a statistically significant relationship between being a religious person and a person involved in social groups in the community among youth who are likely to age out of foster care in the state of Alabama?

Hypothesis 2: There is no statistically significant relationship between being a religious person and a person involved in social groups in the community among youth who are likely to age out of foster care in the state of Alabama.

Table 13 is a cross tabulation of being a religious person by being involved in social groups in the community. It shows the association between being a religious person and involvement in social groups in the community and indicates whether or not there is a statistically significant relationship between the two variables.

Table 13

I am a religious person by being involved in social groups

		<u>I am a Religious Person</u>					
		<u>Disagree</u>		<u>Agree</u>		<u>Total</u>	
		#	%	#	%	#	%
<u>Social Groups</u>	Disagree	17	12.4	38	27.7	55	40.1
	Agree	13	9.5	69	50.4	82	59.9
	Total	30	21.9	107	78.1	137	100.0
Phi = .178		df = 1		Chi Square = .037			

As indicated in Table 13, 40.1% of the respondents indicated that they were not a religious person and were not involved in social groups in the community. A majority of the respondents (59.9%) agreed that they were religious and are involved in social groups in the community.

As shown in Table 13, the statistical measurement phi (Φ) was employed to test for the strength of association between being a religious person and involvement in social groups in the community. As indicated, there was a no relationship ($\Phi = .178$) between the two variables. When chi-square statistical test for significance was applied, the null hypothesis was rejected ($p = .037$) indicating that there was a statistically significant relationship between the two variables at the .05 level of probability.

Research Question 3: Is there a statistically significant relationship between strong family ties and an understanding of one's ethnic background among youth who are likely to age out of foster care in the state of Alabama?

Hypothesis 3: There is no statistically significant relationship between strong family ties and an understanding of one's ethnic background among youth who are likely to age out of foster care in the state of Alabama.

Table 14 is a cross tabulation of having a good understanding of one's ethnic background by belief in strong family ties. It shows the association between having a good understanding of one's ethnic background and belief in strong family ties and indicates whether or not there is a statistically significant relationship between the two variables.

Table 14

A good understanding of my ethnic background by belief in strong family ties

		<u>Understanding of Ethnic Background</u>				<u>Total</u>	
		Disagree #	%	Agree #	%	#	%
<u>Strong Family Ties</u>	Disagree	7	5.1	10	7.3	17	12.4
	Agree	10	7.3	110	80.3	120	87.6
	Total	17	12.4	120	87.6	137	100.0
Phi = .328		df = 1		Chi Square = .000			

As indicated in Table 14, only 12.4% of the respondents agreed that they did not have an understanding of their ethnic background and did not believe in strong family ties. A majority of the respondents (87.6%) agreed that they had an understanding of their ethnic background and believed in strong family ties.

As shown in Table 14, the statistical measurement phi (Φ) was employed to test for the strength of association between having a good understanding of ethnic background and belief in strong family ties. As indicated, there was a weak relationship ($\Phi = .328$) between the two variables. When chi-square statistical test for significance was applied, the null hypothesis was rejected ($p = .000$) indicating that there was a statistically significant relationship between the two variables at the .05 level of probability.

Research Question 4: Is there a statistically significant relationship between valuing schools in the community and furthering my education among youth who are likely to age out of foster care in the state of Alabama?

Hypothesis 4: There is no statistically significant relationship between valuing schools in the community and furthering my education among youth who are likely to age out of foster care in the state of Alabama.

Table 15 is a cross tabulation of belief that schools are important by feeling good about furthering one's education. It shows the association between believing schools are

important by feeling good about furthering one's education and indicates whether or not there is a statistically significant relationship between the two variables.

Table 15

I believe schools are important by feel good about furthering my education

		<u>Understanding of Ethnic Background</u>					
		Disagree		Agree		Total	
		#	%	#	%	#	%
<u>Feel good about Educ</u>	Disagree	5	3.6	3	2.2	8	5.8
	Agree	1	0.7	128	93.4	129	94.2
	Total	6	4.4	131	94.6	137	100.0
Phi = .707		df = 1		Chi Square = .000			

As indicated in Table 15, only 5.8% of the respondents disagreed that schools were important and did not feel good about furthering their education. A majority of the respondents (94.2%) agreed that schools were important and felt good about furthering their education.

As shown in Table 15, the statistical measurement phi (Φ) was employed to test for the strength of association between belief in schools are important and feeling good about furthering education. As indicated, there was a strong relationship ($\Phi = .707$) between the two variables. When chi-square statistical test for significance was applied,

the null hypothesis was rejected ($p = .000$) indicating that there was a statistically significant relationship between the two variables at the .05 level of probability.

In sum, youth in foster care who were likely to age out of foster care responded to the survey by indicating that their belief in the importance of culture and education. A majority (62.0%) of the respondents were African Americans with 28.5% being African American males. However, though the respondents indicated that education was important, only 16.1% were high school graduates, 2.9% had obtained a GED and 6.6% had some college. Of the respondents, 50.4% were between the ages of 16–17 and 26.3% were between the ages of 18–20.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The research study was designed to examine the relationship between culture and education among African American males who were likely to age out of foster care in the state of Alabama. The study answered four questions regarding youth in foster care. The foster care program is a permanently authorized entitlement that provides open-ended matching payments to states for the cost of maintaining children who are wards of the state (Encyclopedia of Everyday Law, 2003).

The conclusions and recommendations of the research findings are presented in this chapter. Recommendations are proposed for future discussions for policy makers, social workers, practitioners and administrators. Each research question is presented in order to summarize the significant findings of interest.

Research Question 1: Is there a statistically significant relationship between culture and education among youth who are likely to age out of foster care in the state of Alabama?

In order to determine if there was a statistically significant relationship between culture and education among youth who were likely to age out of foster care, culture was defined by four variables, (I am a religious person, I am involved in social groups in my

community, I believe strong family ties are important, I have a good understanding of my ethnic background) and education was defined by four variables (I believe schools are important for the community, I believe education is important, I plan to go to college, I feel good about furthering my education) and were analyzed.

Of the 137 youth in foster care that were surveyed, a minority (27.0%) of the respondents indicated that they did not believe culture and education was important. However, a majority (73.0%) of the respondents indicated that culture and education was important. A majority (62.0%) of the respondents were African Americans, with 28.5% being African American males. Also, a majority of the African American respondents (57.7%) agreed that education was important and 45.3% agreed that culture was important.

The statistical measurement phi (Φ) was employed to test for the strength of association between education and culture beliefs of youth in foster care. As indicated, there was a weak relationship ($\Phi = .370$) between the two variables. When chi-square statistical test for significance was applied, the null hypothesis was rejected ($p = .000$) indicating that there was a statistically significant relationship between the two variables at the .05 level of probability (See Table 12).

Research Question 2: Is there a statistically significant relationship between being a religious person and a person involved in social groups in the community among youth who are likely to age out of foster care in the state of Alabama?

Of the 137 foster care youth surveyed, a minority (40.1%) indicated that they were not a religious person and were not involved in social groups in the community. A majority of the respondents, (59.9%) agreed that they were religious and were involved in social groups in the community.

The statistical measurement phi (Φ) was employed to test for the strength of association between being a religious person and involvement in social groups in the community. As indicated, there was a no relationship ($\Phi = .178$) between the two variables. When chi-square statistical test for significance was applied, the null hypothesis was rejected ($p = .037$) indicating that there was a statistically significant relationship between the two variables at the .05 level of probability (See Table 13).

Research Question 3: Is there a statistically significant relationship between strong family ties and an understanding of one's ethnic background among youth who were likely to age out of foster care in the state of Alabama?

Of the 137 foster care youth surveyed, a minority (12.4%) agreed that they did not have an understanding of their ethnic background and did not believe in strong family ties. A majority of the respondents (87.6%) agreed that they had an understanding of their ethnic background and believed in strong family ties.

The statistical measurement phi (Φ) was employed to test for the strength of association between having a good understanding of ethnic background and belief in strong family ties. As indicated, there was a weak relationship ($\Phi = .328$) between the two variables. When chi-square statistical test for significance was applied, the null

hypothesis was rejected ($p = .000$) indicating that there was a statistically significant relationship between the two variables at the .05 level of probability (See Table 14).

Research Question 4: Is there a statistically significant relationship between valuing schools in the community and furthering my education among youth who were likely to age out of foster care in the state of Alabama?

Of the 137 foster care youth surveyed, a minority (5.8%) disagreed that schools were important and did not feel good about furthering their education. A majority of the respondents (94.2%) agreed that schools were important and felt good about furthering their education.

The statistical measurement phi (Φ) was employed to test for the strength of association between beliefs in schools was important and feeling good about furthering education. As indicated, there was a strong relationship ($\Phi = .707$) between the two variables. When chi-square statistical test for significance was applied, the null hypothesis was rejected ($p = .000$) indicating that there was a statistically significant relationship between the two variables at the .05 level of probability (See Table 15).

In sum, the 137 youth in foster care who were likely to age out of foster care responded to the survey by indicating that their belief in the importance of culture and education. A majority (62.0%) were African Americans and 28.5% of those were African American males. Also, a majority of the African Americans (57.7%) agreed that education was important and 45.3% agreed that culture was important indicating that gender and race did not make a difference in the response of these respondents.

However, though the respondents indicated that education was important, only 16.1% were high school graduates, 2.9% had obtained a GED and 6.6% had some college. Of the respondents, 50.4% were between the ages of 16–17 and 26.3% were between the ages of 18–20 indicating a portion of the respondents were not on grade level.

Recommendations

Studies concerning the poor outcomes of youth aging out of foster care are discouraging. It is imperative that child welfare agencies, policy makers and the department of education take heed to the educational needs of youth in foster care. Furthermore, if youth are to be successful, there needs to be considerable effort to make the transition into adulthood as smooth as possible. This would involve a collaboration of all agencies directly involved with this population.

As a result of the findings of this study, the researcher is recommending the following:

1. More research should be conducted concerning barriers to educational success for youth in foster care.
2. More states should offer tuition waiver programs for former foster youth.
3. Social workers should become advocates for this population group to ensure that they are aware of available resources.
4. Social workers need to collaborate with the department of education to ensure that foster youth are receiving adequate and appropriate educational services.
5. Child welfare agencies need to put an emphasis on independent living services for youth who are likely to age out of foster care.

6. Child welfare agencies need to ensure that staff receives training on a continuous basis concerning laws pertaining to services available for youth aging out of foster care.

APPENDIX A
IRB APPROVAL LETTER



CLARK ATLANTA UNIVERSITY

Institutional Review Board
Office of Sponsored Programs

May 2, 2014

Ms. Wanda D. Davidson <wdenise1986@live.com>
School of Social Work
Clark Atlanta University
Atlanta, GA 30314

RE: A Study of The Relationship Between Cultural and Education Among African American Males Who Are Likely to Age Out Of Foster Care In The State of Alabama.

Principal Investigator(s): Wanda Davidson

Human Subjects Code Number: HR2014-4-534-1

Dear Ms. Davidson:

The Human Subjects Committee of the Institutional Review Board (IRB) has reviewed your protocol and approved of it as exempt in accordance with 45 CFR 46.101(b)(2).

Your Protocol Extended Approval Code is HR2014-4-534-1/A

This permit will expire on May 1, 2015. Thereafter, continued approval is contingent upon the annual submission of a renewal form to this office.

The CAU IRB acknowledges your timely completion of the CITI IRB Training in Protection of Human Subjects – "Social and Behavioral Sciences Track". Your certification is valid for two years.

If you have any questions, please contact Dr. Georgianna Bolden at the Office of Sponsored Programs (404) 880-6979 or Dr. Paul I. Musey, (404) 880-6829.

Sincerely:

Paul I. Musey, Ph.D.
Chair
IRB: Human Subjects Committee

cc: Office of Sponsored Programs, "Dr. Georgianna Bolden" <gbolden@cau.edu>

123 James P. Brawley Drive, S.W. • ATLANTA, GA 30314-4391 • (404) 880-8000
Founded in 1913 by consolidation of Atlanta University, Morehouse College, and Spelman College.

APPENDIX B

PERMISSION LETTER

THE ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES

AND

Wanda Davidson, Ph.D. STUDENT, CLARK ATLANTA UNIVERSITY

WHEREAS, the state of Alabama Department of Human Resources (hereinafter "DHR") is authorized by Alabama law to provide child welfare services (i.e., child abuse and neglect investigations, child protective services child foster care, and child adoptions), adult services, child support, TANF (formerly AFDC) and food assistance services in Alabama; and

WHEREAS, Wanda Davidson (hereinafter referred to as "Davidson") has requested access to youth aged 14 years and older living in foster care for the purpose of written survey in her "A Study of the Relationship between Culture and Education Among African American Males Who Are Likely to Age Out of Foster Care in the state of Alabama" project (hereinafter referred to a Project") aimed at describing and explaining the relationship between culture and education among African American Males who are likely to age out of foster care in the state of Alabama, and;

WHEREAS, DHR case records are confidential under state law, and the unauthorized release of information is a criminal misdemeanor pursuant to Code of Alabama 1975, {38-2-6(8)}; and;

WHEREAS, DHR Administrative Rule 660-1-6-09(16) allows the Commissioner of the state DHR, or his designee, to approve access to DHR records and information to persons engaged in bona fide research projects and said approval having been duly granted by the Commissioner; and;

NOW THEREFORE, the parties agreeing to be mutually bound agree as follows:

1. DHR shall allow Davidson to distribute an approved survey instrument entitled "Culture and Education Among African American Males" at the 2014 Alabama Annual Independence Living Conference. Participation will be both anonymous

APPENDIX B

(continued)

and voluntary. The anonymous and voluntary nature of the participation will be communicated to the participants in writing.

2. Davidson agrees to maintain the confidentiality of information, and documents received and conduct her activities in a manner designed to protect all documents and the information contained therein from improper use or disclosure. Davidson shall not publish, release or disclose the identities of the persons described in the records or information disclosed in any reports or interviews. Davidson further agrees she will not copy or disclose any document or information contained therein to any person or entity without the prior consent of DHR and that she will not retain any copies of documents or information contained therein or any summary thereof after completion of the work approved by DHR. Davidson agrees to require all agents, and assigns involved in this project to read this Agreement and sign written statements agreeing to abide by its terms. Davidson shall provide DHR with a written list of all assistants, e.g., secretaries, etc., involved in the project along with written statements from them agreeing to abide by the terms of this agreement.
3. Davidson must submit to DHR prior to release and DHR reserves the right to review, object and change or delete any confidential information contained in the report or paper before it is released.
4. This agreement shall become effective upon the date of the execution of the last signature below and is subject to immediate termination by either party upon written notice to the other party.

Date: 5/20/14

by: Wanda Davidson,

PhD Student

Clark Atlanta University

Date: 5/20/14

by: Carolyn B. Lapsley

Deputy Commissioner for Children and Family
Services, Alabama Department of Human
Resources

APPENDIX C

LETTER TO PARTICIPANTS

A STUDY OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CULTURE AND EDUCATION AMONG AFRICAN AMERICAN MALES WHO ARE LIKELY TO AGE OUT OF FOSTER CARE IN THE STATE OF ALABAMA.

You are invited to participate in a research study on the relationship between culture and education among African American males who are likely to age out of Foster Care in the state of Alabama. This study consists of a questionnaire with fifteen questions. The findings will be used in an analysis for my dissertation.

There are no known risks to participants who agree to take part in this research. There are no known personal benefits to participants who agree to take part in this research. However, it is hoped that those who participate in this study will help research in the field of social work education, social work curriculum development, and the professional development of social service workers in the United States.

I would appreciate your cooperation. Since all of the responses are confidential, please do not put your name on the questionnaire. Choose only one answer for each question. Please respond to all questions. The questionnaire will take less than five minutes to complete.

This study is being conducted by Wanda D. Davidson, a Ph.D. student at Clark Atlanta University Whitney M. Young, Jr., School of Social Work. All responses to the questionnaire will remain confidential. Participation in this study is voluntary. If participants have questions about the study, please contact the principal investigator, Wanda D. Davidson by email at: wdenisc1986@live.com or Dr. Richard Lyle, Advisor at the Whitney M. Young, Jr., School of Social Work at (404) 880-8006.

If you have any questions now or later, related to the integrity of the research, (the rights of research subjects or research-related injuries, where applicable), you are encouraged to contact Dr. Georgiana Bolden at the Office of Sponsored Programs (404) 880-6979 or Dr. Paul I. Mausey, (404) 880-6929 at Clark Atlanta University.

Thank you
Wanda Davidson, MSW

APPENDIX D

SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

Questionnaire

Culture and Education Among African American Males

School of Social Work Ph.D. Program

Wanda Davidson – 2014

Clark Atlanta University

SECTION I: Demographic Information

Place a mark (X) next to the appropriate item. Choose only one answer.

1. My gender: 1)___Male 2)___Female
2. My age group: 1)___14-15 2)___16-17 3)___18-20
3. Ethnicity: 1)___White 2)___African American 3)___Latino
4)___Asian 5)___Other
4. Education: 1)___Attending Middle School 2)___Attending High School
3)___High School Graduate 4)___GED 5)___Some College
5. Length of time in Foster Care: 1)___Less than 6 months 2)___7-12 months
3)___1-3 years 4)___more than 3 years
6. My living arrangement: 1)___Foster Home 2)___Group Home
3)___Residential 4)___Relative Placement
5)___Independent Living
7. Number of Siblings: 1)___None 2)___1-3 3)___5 or more

APPENDIX D

(continued)

Section II: How much do you agree with the following statements?

Instructions: Write the number indicating your answer (1 thru 4) in the blank in front of each statement on the questionnaire. Choose only one answer for each item and respond to all of the statements.

1= Strongly Disagree 2= Disagree 3= Agree 4= Strongly Agree

Culture

- _____ 8. I am a religious person.
- _____ 9. I am involved in social groups in my community.
- _____ 10. I believe strong family ties are important.
- _____ 11. I have a good understanding of my ethnic background.

Education

- _____ 12. I believe schools are important for communities.
- _____ 13. I believe education is important.
- _____ 14. I plan to go to college.
- _____ 15. I feel good about furthering my education.

Thank you for your cooperation _____ The End

APPENDIX E

SPSS PROGRAM ANALYSIS

TITLE 'CULTURE AND EDUCATION AMONG AFRICAN AMERICAN MALES'.
SUBTITLE 'Wanda Davidson CAU PhD Program - 2014'.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Richard Lyle, PhD Chair
Robert Waymer, PhD
Sebrena Jackson, PhD

DATA LIST FIXED/

ID 1-3
GENDER 4
AGEGRP 5
ETHNIC 6
EDUCAT 7
LENGTH 8
LIVING 9
NUMBER 10
RELIGI 11
GROUPS 12
FAMILY 13
UNDERS 14
SCHOOL 15
IMPORT 16
COLLEG 17
MYEDUC 18.

COMPUTE CULTURE = (RELIGI + GROUPS + FAMILY + UNDERS) /4.
COMPUTE CEDUCAT = (SCHOOL + IMPORT + COLLEG + MYEDUC) /4.

VARIABLE LABELS

ID Case Number
GENDER 'Q1 Gender'
AGEGRP 'Q2 Age Group'
ETHNIC 'Q3 Ethnicity'
EDUCAT 'Q4 Education'
LENGTH 'Q5 Length of time in Foster Care'
LIVING 'Q6 My living arrangement'
NUMBER 'Q7 Number of Sibling'
RELIGI 'Q8 I am a religious person'
GROUPS 'Q9 I am involved in social groups in my community'
FAMILY 'Q10 I believe strong family ties are important'
UNDERS 'Q11 I have a good understanding of my ethnic background'

APPENDIX E

(continued)

SCHOOL 'Q12 I believe schools are important for communities'
IMPORT 'Q13 I believe education is important'
COLLEG 'Q14 I plan to go to college'
MYEDUC 'Q15 I feel good about furthering my education'.

VALUE LABELS

GENDER

- 1 'Male'
- 2 'Female'/'

AGEGRP

- 1 '14-15'
- 2 '16-17'
- 3 '18-20'/'

ETHNIC

- 1 'White'
- 2 'AfricanAmer'
- 3 'Latino'
- 4 'Asian'
- 5 'Other'/'

EDUCAT

- 1 'In Middle School'
- 2 'In High School'
- 3 'High School Grad'
- 4 'GED Grad'
- 5 'Some College'/'

LENGTH

- 1 'Less than 6 months'
- 2 '7-12 months'
- 3 '1-3 years'
- 4 'More than 3 years'/'

LIVING

- 1 'Foster Home'
- 2 'Group Home'
- 3 'Residential'
- 4 'Relative Placement'
- 5 'Independent Living'/'

NUMBER

- 1 'None'
- 2 '1-3'
- 3 '5 or More'/'

RELIGI

- 1 'Strongly Disagree'
- 2 'Disagree'
- 3 'Agree'
- 4 'Strongly Agree'/'

APPENDIX E

(continued)

GROUPS

- 1 'Strongly Disagree'
- 2 'Disagree'
- 3 'Agree'
- 4 'Strongly Agree'/'

FAMILY

- 1 'Strongly Disagree'
- 2 'Disagree'
- 3 'Agree'
- 4 'Strongly Agree'/'

UNDERS

- 1 'Strongly Disagree'
- 2 'Disagree'
- 3 'Agree'
- 4 'Strongly Agree'/'

SCHOOL

- 1 'Strongly Disagree'
- 2 'Disagree'
- 3 'Agree'
- 4 'Strongly Agree'/'

IMPORT

- 1 'Strongly Disagree'
- 2 'Disagree'
- 3 'Agree'
- 4 'Strongly Agree'/'

COLLEG

- 1 'Strongly Disagree'
- 2 'Disagree'
- 3 'Agree'
- 4 'Strongly Agree'/'

MYEDUC

- 1 'Strongly Disagree'
- 2 'Disagree'
- 3 'Agree'
- 4 'Strongly Agree'/'

CULTURE

- 1 'Strongly Disagree'
- 2 'Disagree'
- 3 'Agree'
- 4 'Strongly Agree'/'

CEDUCAT

- 1 'Strongly Disagree'
- 2 'Disagree'
- 3 'Agree'
- 4 'Strongly Agree'/'

APPENDIX E

(continued)

RECODE RELIGI GROUPS FAMILY UNDERS (1 THRU 2.99 = 2) (3 THRU 4.99 = 3).
 RECODE SCHOOL IMPORT COLLEG MYEDUC (1 THRU 2.99 = 2) (3 THRU 4.99 = 3).
 RECODE CULTURE CEDUCAT (1 THRU 2.99 = 2) (3 THRU 4.99 = 3).

MISSING VALUES

GENDER AGEGRP ETHNIC EDUCAT LENGTH LIVING NUMBER RELIGI
 GROUPS FAMILY UNDERS SCHOOL IMPORT COLLEG MYEDUC (0).

BEGIN DATA

001222241233144444
 002225242232124444
 003121244143344444
 004112245244444444
 005221244233433444
 006212222332433444
 007115242233444344
 008121221344444444
 009122211333444444
 010112222333244444
 011122222344214444
 012111212323243323
 013122222244434444
 014122231343333334
 015231342144444444
 016221211323444444
 017112232334434444
 018212222233434444
 019122241344443333
 020112221233433344
 021221242333314344
 022211242331444444
 023115222211143232
 024222241333344444
 025212144244434344
 026122331231444444
 027222232344434444
 028122245234444443
 029122231313231111
 030122241333343344
 031222231243424444
 032225222342444444
 033211122344444444
 034211211342433444
 035212222231333444
 036221231244434444

APPENDIX E

(continued)

037221232333433344
038213231334444444
039221232311213444
040221211331434443
041122241234434444
042212231231131111
043221241333344444
044115131243433443
045112241133333343
046112242334424444
047212241233333333
048215231213333333
049212241233333344
050212241332433433
051222231222444444
052212231234443344
053212121323444444
054111141323332333
055112231313444412
056211231232344443
057225224311444444
058222231231444434
059221232143444444
060212121232334433
061215231233333333
062122243244444444
063222211331444444
064132242341234444
065132331343444444
066122242213324444
067222232331413444
068222221334324444
069122224321344444
070121241243434324
071222211332434444
072231341234444444
073231531244444444
074122231232434433
075232532342434444
076222232243344444
077131441221444413
078125242233334344
079133531231444444
080233244341314431
081132521343444444
082222241243434444
083121222324344433

APPENDIX E

(continued)

084122242234344444
085133231233334333
086125224122444444
087222343333333333
088122114211112341
089121242241344444
090232413232434444
091121214241444433
092132544342444444
093135411221434434
094232231312111111
095221241243324444
096221241232324444
097222242332444444
098222211233334434
099221241343334444
100232331233433444
101235321343444444
102131342344233333
103231545223244444
104132342233333333
105132545333444444
106132232222333333
107222242322443444
108132315212333444
109222331344444444
110132242312434434
111231342224444444
11222222334433444
113122341232334433
114222241234334444
115232431321444444
116235214124333444
117132345232334444
118212221333333333
119222332331444444
120222245332323344
121122241344444444
122222231243234444
123132334244444444
124132341341111111
125122241243444444
126232545342444444
127232342332434444
128232342343434444
129232345244224444
130121221341344444

APPENDIX E

(continued)

```
131222241232334434
132222341332334444
133135545322444444
134122241322333333
135212234314444444
136231325343444444
137221232241444444
END DATA.
```

FREQUENCIES

```
/VARIABLES GENDER AGEGRP ETHNIC EDUCAT LENGTH LIVING NUMBER RELIGI
GROUPS FAMILY UNDERS SCHOOL IMPORT COLLEG MYEDUC CULTURE CEDUCAT
/STATISTICS = DEFAULT.
```

REFERENCES

- Administration for Children and Families. (2012). Federal and state reporting systems about NYTD. Retrieved from http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/systems/nytd/about_nytd.htm
- American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry. (2005). *Facts for families: Foster Care (No. 64)*. Washington, DC: Author.
- Annie E. Casey Foundation. (2009). Family to Family Institute. Retrieved from www.aecf.org/
- Ansell, D. (2010). Preparation for adulthood: What have we learned in the last 25 years? *Journal of Child and Youth Care Work*, 23, 16-20.
- Asante, M. K. (2003) *Afrocentricity: The theory of social change*. (1st ed.). Chicago, IL: African American Images.
- Atukpaw, G. (2009). *Identities and futures explored within community of transitioning foster care youth participating in independent living programs*. (Doctoral dissertation). Available from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses database. (UMI 3363937)
- Axinn, J., & Levin, H. (1992). *Social welfare: A history of the American response to need*. (3rd ed.). New York, NY: Longman Publishing.

- Barbell, K., & Freundlick, M. (2001). *Foster care today*. Washington, DC: Casey Family Programs.
- Baugh, E. (2008). A population at risk: Youth aging out of the foster care system and implication for extension. Retrieved from <http://www.joe.org/joe/2008august/iw3php>
- Beisse, K., & Tyre, A. (2013). Caregiver involvement in the education of youth in foster care: An exploratory study. *School of Social Work Journal*, 37(2), 1-20.
- Bennett, M. D., Jr. (2010). Cultural and context: A study of neighborhood effects on racial socialization and ethnic identity content in a sample of African American adolescents. *Journal of Black Psychology*, 40, 138-165.
- Blome, W. W. (1997). What happens to foster kids: Educational experience of a random sample of foster care youth and a matched group of non-foster care youth. *Child and Adolescent Social Work Journal*, 14(1), 41-53.
- Briggs, H. E., & McBeath, B. (2010). Infusing culture into practice: Developing and implementing evidence-based mental health services for African American foster youth. *Child Welfare*, 89(1), 31-60.
- Brittian, A. S. (2011). Understanding African American adolescents' identity development: A relational developmental system perspective. *Journal of Black Psychology*, 38(2), 172-200.
- Brooks Herd, V. (2011). *Racial/cultural identity development in foster children placed in transracial foster homes*. (Doctoral dissertation). Available from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses database. (UMI 3454682)

- Brown, J., Sintzel, J., Arnault, D., & George, N. (2009). Confidence to foster across cultures: Caregiver perspectives. *Journal of Child and Family Studies*, 18(6), 633-642.
- Bruskas, D. (2008). Children in foster care: A vulnerable population at risk. *Journal of Child and Adolescent Psychiatric Nursing*, 21(2), 70-77.
- Calix, A. (2009). *The effect of foster care experience and characteristic on academic achievement*. (Doctoral dissertation). Available from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses database. (UMI 3366309)
- Casey Family Programs. (2005). Knowing who you are: Helping youth in care develop their racial and ethnic identity. (DVD). (H. Merz and M. Hightower, Producers). Seattle, WA: Author.
- Cherry, K. (2012). Erikson's theory of psychosocial development. About.com Guide. Retrieved from <http://psychology.about.com/od/psychosocialtheories/a/psychosocial.htm>
- Cherry, K. (2012). Social learning theory: Understanding Bandura's theory of learning. About.com Guide. Retrieved from <http://psychology.about.com/od/developmentalpsychology/a/sociallearning>
- Child Welfare Information Gateway. (2003). Children of color in the child welfare system: Perspectives from child welfare community. Retrieved from www.childwelfare.gov
- Child Welfare Information Gateway. (2006). Enhancing permanency for older youth in out of home care. Retrieved from www.childwelfare.gov

- Child Welfare Information Gateway. (2013). Child welfare/foster care statistics.
Retrieved from www.childwelfare.gov
- Corwin, Z. B. (2008). *College, connections, and care: How mobility and social capital affect college preparation for youth in foster care*. (Doctoral dissertation).
Available from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses database. (UMI 3311050)
- Courtney, M. (2005, April). Youth aging out of foster care. *Network on Transitions to Adulthood Policy Brief, 19*. University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA.
- Cox, T. L. (2013). Improving educational outcomes for children and youths in foster care. *Children and Schools, 35*(1), 59-62.
- Crampton, D. S., Usher, C. L., Wildfire, J. B., Webster, D., & Cuccaro-Alamin, S. (2011). Does community and family engagement enhance permanency for children in foster care? Findings from an evaluation of the Family-to-Family initiative. *Child Welfare, 90*(4), 61-77.
- Crawford, M., Tilbury, C., Creed, P., & Buys, N. (2011). The role of carers and caseworkers in the school-to-work transition of young people in care. *Australian Social Work, 64*(4), 459-474.
- Curtis, C. M., & Denby, R. W. (2011). African American children in the child welfare system: Requiem or reform. *Journal of Public Welfare, 5*, 111-137.
- Curtis, P., Dale, G., Jr., & Kendall, J. (1999). *The foster care crisis: Translating research into policy and practice*. Lincoln, NE and London: University of Nebraska Press.
- Daining, C. & DePanfilis, D. (2007). Resilience of youth in transition from out of home care to adulthood. *Children and Youth Services Review, 29*, 1158-1178.

- Daughtery, L. G. (2011). Understanding identity development and spirituality in African American female adolescents through their foster care experiences. *Journal of African American Studies, 15*, 455-468.
- Day, A. (2011). *An examination of post-secondary education access, retention, and success of foster care youth*. (Doctoral dissertation). Available from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses database. (UMI 3480280)
- Delphin-Rittmon, M. E., Andres-Hyman, R., Flanagan, E. H., & Davidson, L. (2012). Seven essential strategies for promoting and sustaining systemic cultural competence. *Psychiatric Quarterly, 84*(1), 53-64.
- Dobelstein, A. (1990). *Social welfare: Policy and analysis*. Chicago, IL: Nelson-Hall Publishers.
- Duke, A. (2008). *Opaque visions of the self: The possible selves of African American adolescent males in the context of schooling*. (Doctoral dissertation). Available from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses database. (UMI 1458891)
- Dvir, O., Weiner, A., & Kupermintz, H. (2012). Children in residential group care with no family ties: Facing existential alones. *Residential Treatment for Children and Youth, 29*, 282-304.
- Ecke, L., Stenslie, M., Aliberti, M., Broderick, S.J., Cross, A., Freeman, J., & Robe, A. (2009). *Flux: Life after foster care*. Alexandria, VA: Foster Care Alumni of America.
- Evans, A. B., Banerjee, M., Aldana, A., Foust, M., & Rowley, S. (2012). Racial socialization as a mechanism for positive development among African American youth. *Child Development Perspectives, 6*(3), 251-257.

- Evans, T. (2010). 2Impact: Black youth in foster care. Mocha Moguls. Retrieved February 10, 2012, from <http://mochamoguls.com/fostercare>
- Farruggia, S., Greenberger, E., Chen, C., & Heckhausen, J. (2006). Perceived social environment and adolescents' well-being and adjustment: Comparing a foster care sample with a match sample. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 35(3), 330-339.
- Floyd, J. (2008). *Former foster care individuals' experience of racial/cultural identity development. An exploratory study.* (Doctoral dissertation). Available from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses database. (UMI 3321861)
- Foster Care. (2003). Encyclopedia of Everyday Law. Retrieved from <http://www.enotes.com/family-law-reference/foster-care/print>
- Fowler, P. J. (2009). *Emerging adulthood and aging out of foster care: Settings associated with mental health.* (Doctoral dissertation). Available from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses database. (UMI 3339393)
- Garcia, A. R. (2010). *Maltreated, displaced and under-served foster youth: Predictors of developmental outcomes among racial diverse foster care alumni.* (Doctoral dissertation). Available from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses database. (UMI 3431534)
- Gavazzi, S. M., Alford, K. A., & McKenry, P. C. (1996). Culturally specific programs for foster youth: The sample case of an African American rites of passage program. *Family Relations*, 45(2), 166-174.
- Goerge, R. M. (2002). Employment outcomes for youth aging out of foster care. Retrieved from <http://aspe.hhs.gov/hsp/fostercare-agingout02/>

- Gray, S. S. & Nybell, L. M. (1990). Issues in African American family preservation. *Child Welfare*, 69(6), 513-523.
- Gustavasson, N., & MacEachron, A. E. (2012). Educational policy and foster youths: The risk of change. *Children and Schools*, 34, 83-91.
- Hahnel, J., & Zan Vile, C. (2012). The other achievement gap: Court-dependent youth and educational advocacy. *Journal of Law and Education*, 41(3), 435-481.
- Harker, R. M., Dobel-Ober, D., Lawrence, J., Berridge, D., & Sinclair, R. (2003). Who takes care of education? Looked after children's perceptions of support for educational progress. *Child and Family Social Work*, 8, 89-100.
- Harper, S. R., & Davis, H. F., III. (2012, Winter-Spring). They (don't) care about education: A counternarrative on Black male students' responses to inequitable schooling. *Educational Foundations*, 26(1).
- Harrison-Jackson, M. (2009). *A multi-state evaluation of the factors predicting educational achievement of adult foster care alumni*. (Doctoral dissertation). Available from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses database. (UMI 3351403)
- Harvey, A. R., Loughney, G. K., & Moore, J. (2002). A model program for African American children in the foster care system. *Journal of Health & Social Policy*, 16, 195-206.
- Havalchak, K. A., White, C. R., O'Brien, K., Pecora, P. J., & Sepulveda, M. (2009). Foster care experiences and educational outcomes of young adults formally placed in foster care. *School of Social Work Journal*, 34.

- Henderson, T. J. (2006). *Tales of transition: A qualitative multiple case study inquiry on the emancipation preparation of foster care adolescents*. (Doctoral dissertation). Available from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses database. (UMI 3412586)
- Herlocker, L. K. (2006). Confronting college: Foster care youth deciding whether participate in higher education programs. (Doctoral dissertation). Available from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses database. (UMI 3240383)
- Hurd, N. M., Sanchez, B., Zimmerman, M. A., & Caldwell, C. H. (2012). Natural mentors, racial identity, educational attainment among African American adolescents: Exploring pathways to success. *Child Development*, 83(4), 1196-1212.
- Hurley, M. (2012). *Predictors of child wellbeing: The impact of relative caregiver and permanent placement type on children in foster care*. (Doctoral Dissertation). Retrieved from <http://heller.brandeis.edu/academic/phd/dissertation/abstracts/hurley.html>
- Jackson, L. J., White, C. R., O'Brien, K., DiLorenzo, P., Cathcart, E., Wolf, M., Bruskas, D., Pecora, P. J., Nix-Early, V., & Cabrera, J. (2010). Exploring spirituality among youth in foster care: Findings from the Casey field office mental health study. *Child and Family Social Work*, 15, 107-117.
- Jackson, V. (2010). An exploratory study of the meaning of cultural in family preservation and kinship care services: An Africentric translation. Retrieved February 9, 2012, from <http://alldissertations.com/full.php>
- Jacobson, L. (2008). Schooling issue a complication for foster care. *Education Week*, 27(41), 1-16.

- James, A. G., Fine, M. A., & Turner, L. J. (2012). An empirical examination of youths' perceptions of spirituality as an internal development asset during adolescence. *Applied Developmental Science, 16*(4), 181-194
- Johnson, F. L., Mickelson, S., & Davila, M. L. (2013). Transracial foster care and adoption: Issues and realities. *New England Journal of Public Policy, 25*(1), 5, 1-14.
- Jones, L. P. (2010). The educational experiences of former foster youth three years after discharge. *Child Welfare, 89*(6), 7-22.
- Laursen, E. K. (2014). Respectful youth cultures. *Reclaiming Children and Youth, 22*(4), 48-52.
- Lynn, M. (2006). Race, culture, and the education of African Americans. *Educational Theory, 56*(1), 107-120.
- Mann-Feder, V. (2010). Intervening with youth in the transition from care to independent living. *Journal of Child and Youth Work, 23*, 8-13.
- Martin, P. Y., & Jackson, S. (2002). Educational success for children in public care; Advice from a group of high achievers. *Child and Family Social Work, 7*, 121-130.
- Mbiti, J. S. (1975). *Introduction to African religion*. (2nd revised ed.). South Africa: Heinemann Educational Publishers.
- McGuinness, T. M., & Broome, B. (2007). The culture of adversity: Youth in foster care. *Culture and Diversity Issues, 27*(5).

- McMillan, C., Auslander, W., Elze, D., White, T., & Thompson, R. (2003). Educational experiences and aspiration of older youth in foster care. *Child Welfare*, 82(4), 475-495.
- McRoy, R. G. (2008). Acknowledging disproportionate outcomes and changing service delivery. *Child Welfare*, 87(2), 205-210.
- Merdinger, J., Hines, A., Osterling, K., & Wyatt, P. (2005). Pathways to college for former foster youth: Understanding factors that contribute to educational success. *Child Welfare*, 84(6), 867-896.
- Moseley, L. R. (2009). *Resilience in the lives of African American men and women reared in substitute care*. (Doctoral dissertation). Available from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses database. (UMI 3359687)
- Nasuti, J. P., York, R., & Sandell, K. (2004). Comparison of role perceptions of white and African American foster parents. *Child Welfare*, 83(1), 49-68.
- Newman, B., & Newman, P. (1991). *Development through life span. A psycho-social approach*. (5th. ed.). Belmont, CA: Brooks/Cole Publishing Company.
- Phinney, J. (1992). The multigroup ethnic identity measure: A new scale for use with diverse groups. *Journal of Adolescent Research*, 2, 156-176.
- Ponds, K. T. (2014). Spiritual development with youth. *Reclaiming Children and Youth*, 23(1), 58-61.
- Prieto, S. (2008). *Psychological adjustment among emancipated foster young adults*. (Doctoral dissertation). Available from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Database. (UMI 1455561)

- Reilly, T. (2003). Transition from care: Status and outcomes of youth who aged out of foster care. *Child Welfare*, 82(6), 727-746.
- Riggs, D. (2002). Denying access to black families hurts children. NCAC Adoptalk Articles & Publications. Retrieved from <http://www.ncac/adoptalk/denyingaccess.html>
- Rios, S. J. (2008). *From foster care to college: Young adults' perceptions of factors that impacted their academic achievement*. (Doctoral dissertation). Available from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses database. (UMI 3347043)
- Roberts, D. (2010). Beyond foster care: Racism at the root of racial imbalance in child welfare. Retrieved from www.oregon.gov
- Roberts, M. A. (2010). Toward a theory of culturally relevant critical teacher care: African American teachers' definitions and perceptions of care for African American students. *Journal of Moral Education*, 39(4), 449-467.
- Ryan, J., Hernandez, D., & Herz, D. (2007). Developmental trajectories of offending for male adolescents leaving foster care. *Social Work Research*, 31(2), 83-93.
- Salazar, A. M. (2013). The value of a college degree for foster care alumni: Comparison with general population samples. *Social Work*, 58(2), 139-150.
- Schneider-Munoz, A. J. (2010). What does independence mean? *Journal of Child and Youth Care Work*, 23, 3-5.
- Schreiber, J. (2010). The role of religion in foster. Paper presented at the North American Association of Christians in Social Work. (pp 1-23). Raleigh-Durham, NC.
- Shalil, F., & Hoosain, R. (2001). *Multi-cultural education: Issues, policies & practices*. Connecticut: Information Age Publishing.

- Shin, S. H. (2003). Building evidence to promote educational competence of youth in foster care. *Child Welfare League of America*, 82(5).
- Shirk, M., & Strangler, G. (2004). *On their own: What happens to kids when they age out of the foster care system?* Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
- Snow, K. (2009). The case for enhanced educational supports for children in public care: An integrative literature review of the educational pathway of children in care. *Vulnerable Children and Youth Studies*, 4(4), 300-311.
- Tate, S. (2001). The academic experiences of African American males in an urban midwest foster care system. *Journal of Social Studies Research*, 25(2), 36-46.
- Theiss, D. L. (2010). *Promoting educational well-being for foster care youth in Lucas County, Ohio: Exploring the impact of race, age, and service provision on the development of human capital*. (Doctoral dissertation). Available from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses database. (UMI 3424710)
- Thomas, D. E., Coard, S. I., Stevenson, H. C., Bentley, K., & Zamel, P. (2009). Racial and emotional factors predicting teachers' perceptions of classroom behavioral maladjustment for urban African American male youth. *Psychology in the School*, 46(2), 184-196.
- Timms, J. (2009). *African American children in an urban foster care system: Perceptions of disproportionately and demographics*. (Doctoral dissertation). Available from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses database. (UMI 3370364)
- Tompkins, T. (2010). A brief chronological history of the foster care system in America. Yahoo Voices.

- Tyre, A. D. (2012). Educational supports for middle school youths involved in the foster care system. *Children and Schools*, 34(4), 231-238.
- U.S. Census Bureau. (2013). State and county quickfacts. Retrieved from <http://quickfacts.census.gov>
- Ventimiglia, V. (2007). African American children in foster care. Report to the chairman. Committee on Ways & Means, House of Representative. Retrieved from www.gao.gov
- Watson, C., & Kabler, B. (2012). Improving educational outcomes for children in foster care. *National Association of School Psychologists*, 40(5), 27-29.
- White, C., O'Brien, K., Jackson, L., Havalchak, A., Phillips, C., Thomas, P., & Cabrera, J. (2008). Ethnic identity development among adolescents in foster care. *Social Work Journal*, 25(6), 497-515.
- Wildeman, C., & Emanuel, N. (2014). Cumulative risks of foster care placement by age 18 for US children, 2000-2011. *PLoS One*, 9(3).
- Williams, J. M., & Bryan, J. (2013). Overcoming adversity: High-achieving African American youth's perspectives on educational resilience. *Journal of Counseling & Development*, 91, 291-300.
- Williamson, L. A. (2013). Providing support and stability to students in foster care. *Teaching Tolerance*, 44.
- Woodson, G. C. (2005). *The mis-education of the negro*. (Dover ed.). New York, NY: Dover Publications, Inc.
- Wynn, M. (1992). *Empowering African American males to succeed: A ten-step approach for parents and teachers*. Marietta, GA: Rising Sun Publishing.

- Yeh, C. J., Borrero, N. E., & Shea, M. (2011). Spirituality as a cultural asset for culturally diverse youth in urban schools. *Counseling and Values, 55*(2), 185-198.
- Zarrett, N., & Lerner, R. (2008). Ways to promote the positive development of children and youth. *Child Trends*. Retrieved from www.childtrends.org
- Zetlin, A., Weiberg, L., & Shea, N. (2006). Improving educational prospects for youth in foster care: The education liaison model. *Intervention in School and Clinic, 41*(5), 267-272.